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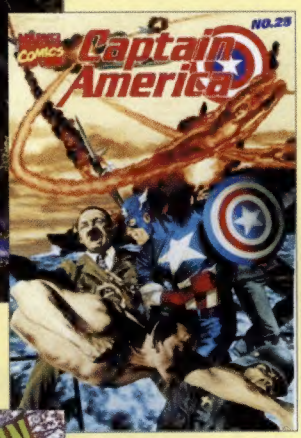

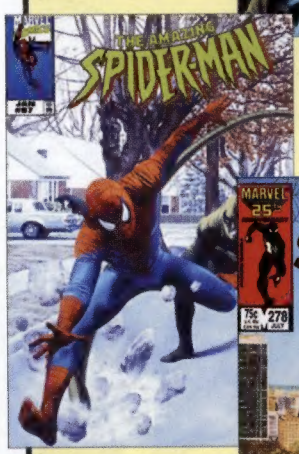

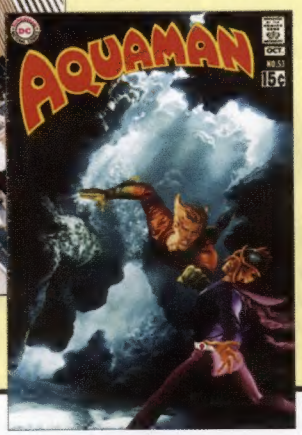

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#187 AUGUST 2005

Inside this issue

COVER: Back from the Golden Age of British Comics, the stunning artwork of the late Jesus Blasco is showcased in a new Titan Books series collecting The Steel Claw. Written by SF fan favourite H Ken Bulmer and comics mainstay Tom Tulley, the first two strips from 1962 are gathered behind cover art by Brian Bolland. Full story on page 24.

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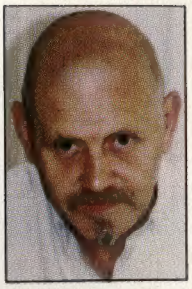
Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

Responsibility. It's one of those grown-up words, a meaningless concept until you wake up one morning and suddenly have to smell the coffee. It can hit you at any age, like parenthood – itself a major responsibility-inducing role. But it means different things to different people, and at different times. Being responsible for a deed doesn't make such become a responsible deed, no. You could be remarkably irresponsible for being responsible for doing something. But let's not get caught up in semantics here. Roll back to main plot...

One major reality shock for me, continuing this responsibility riff, hit when I left the halls of academia for the commercial world. It wasn't about getting a pass any more. 75%, 80% even 85% accuracy just wasn't good enough. The real world wanted 100%, something unimaginable to students. But you try working in a research lab (as I did, initially) and getting 75%, 80% or 85% accuracy with lab tests. Not good enough, lad.

The same applies in retail. Try saying, "Well, the day's take matches 95% with the till roll." Or, "I get the change right most of the time." See how long you last in retail.

But these are precise sciences, mathematics and, in my case, organic chemistry. Art is a different matter. Responsibility isn't set in stone with the arts.

Superbaby climbs into a microwave in an absurdist comics story. Is the writer being irresponsible? The publisher thought so, strongly enough to have the entire comic's print run pulped. That he was okay about it appearing later with a higher cover price isn't the issue here.

At IPC in the '70s, we had a case where one of those cheeky tyke heroes with a Y at the end of his name (Chalky, Wacky, Smiley, whatever) climbed into a fridge to lower his temperature so he wouldn't have to go to school. Irresponsible writer. Apparently readers emulate their comics heroes on this side of the Atlantic too, so that one got nixed. No "Remember kids, Batman and Robin can't fly so don't you try!" disclaimer for the print world, that only applies to television. Comics have to be more responsible, seemingly.

At IPC, or more precisely IPC Boys Juveniles as the department was stoically named, the chief arbiter of responsibility in print was Sidney Bicknell, assistant managing editor. His more creative claim to fame, when editor of **Valiant**, was creating The Steel Claw.

The Steel Claw... a man who put his finger into a light socket every week so he could turn invisible.

Hey, kids, fancy becoming invisible..?

***Comics International** editor Dez Skinn's career in the industry spans 35 years. Titles he has created include **Doctor Who Weekly**, **House of Hammer**, **Hulk Comic**, **Starburst** and **Warrior**. Ex-editorial director of Marvel UK – where his Stan Lee-coined Sez Dez column had a monthly audience of over 500,000 – he has also edited titles including **Buster**, **Conan**, **MAD**, **Star Wars Weekly**, **2000 AD Presents**, **Rogue Trooper** and **Spider-Man** and won over 20 Eagle Awards.*

*Sadly, he's still waiting for any money from his co-created (now in production as a major motion picture) **V for Vendetta**.*

For Mankind, Time Is Running Out

THE TEN-SECONDERS

ROB WILLIAMS MARK HARRISON

COMING IN 2005

Countdown over as Infinite Crisis strikes DC Universe

The first 40-page issue of DC's seven-part ***Infinite Crisis*** *features alternate covers by Jim Lee and Sandra Hope* [see art above] *and George Pérez, who also provides dustjacket art* [below] *for the slipcased* ***Crisis on Infinite Earths: The Absolute Edition****, which consists of two hardcover volumes.*

JSA writer teams up with former ***Wonder Woman*** *artist Phil Jimenez for mini bringing continuity upheaval*

TWO DECADES after it rebooted its continuity with 1985's groundbreaking **Crisis on Infinite Earths** *[see story below]*, DC is once again set to make drastic changes to the history of comics' original superhero universe.

But while many take a cynical view that such events as the forthcoming **Infinite Crisis** are commercially inspired and creatively barren, Dan Didio sees them as something of a necessity.

Discussing the factors that prompted the need for the $2.99 seven-parter, the vice president and executive editor of DC Universe titles told **CI** that DC assesses continuity on three levels with immutable facts – such as the origins of Batman and Superman – on level one.

Batgirl crippled

Citing Batman's relationship with Commissioner Gordon and that Barbara Gordon became Batgirl only to end up crippled by the Joker as examples of the second or enhancement level, he stated, "These enrich the characters, enhance the story around them and give them more depth and are an area of story potential."

Level three encompasses the sort of trivia that is only of interest to the most diehard of fans "That's the type of story we shouldn't be concerning ourselves with or shouldn't hold on to so tightly. We have to have a certain level of acceptance of the fact that there's an evolution of our characters that need to change. Batman's not aging and we have to turn things around him in order to keep him as contemporary and exciting as possible."

One of the guys

Didio says Marvel can tweak bits of its continuity as its universe started "pretty much in sync". But DC has, for example, Superman as a contemporary to three generations of Green Lantern. "It's the same Superman and these guys keep on aging around him. That forces us to basically reboot the DC Universe every once in a while just so our prime characters – the characters that the entire company and the entire [DC superhero] universe is built on – can fit in better.

"It's a very strange thing," Didio continued, "because what happens every time we do that is that you lose some of what makes Superman and Batman unique. As they get reinterpreted into the [latest, updated DC] universe, they become just one of the guys rather than being the forefathers of everything that was to follow."

Infinite Crisis, said Didio, is something of a direct sequel to **Crisis on Infinite Earths**. It is written by Geoff (**JSA**) Johns and drawn by the **Planetary/The Authority: Ruling the World**'s Phil Jimenez and Andy Lanning.

***Infinite Crisis** #1, priced $3.99, ships on October 12.*

Original Crisis gets Absolute treatment

THE COUNTDOWN to **Infinite Crisis** *[see above]* began almost 20 years after Marv Wolfman and penciller George Pérez launched their parallel worlds-erasing 12-part **Crisis on Infinite Earths**.

As a complement to the premiere of the new continuity-redefining mini and to celebrate the anniversary of the 1985 comicbook event, DC is issuing a deluxe 12½x8½" version of the original maxi-series on November 16.

The $99.99 **Crisis on Infinite Earths: The Absolute Edition** is a two-volume slipcased set. The 368-page Volume One reprints all 12 issues of the series, which was inked by Dick Giordano, Jerry Ordway and Mike DeCarlo.

Superboy puzzle

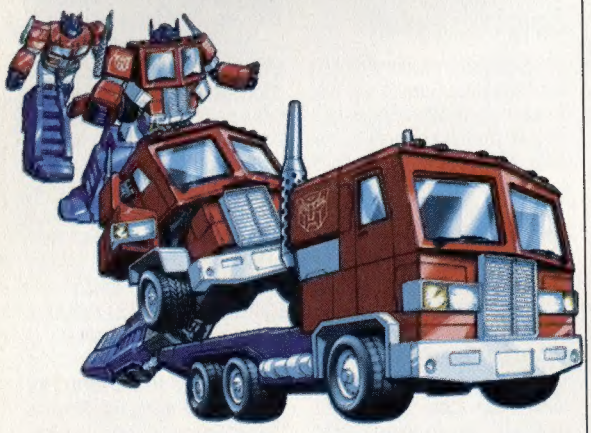
A 96-pager, the second volume tells the making of the maxiseries, replete with memos, notes, original plots and commentary from Wolfman and Ordway.

The hardcover also contains the first reprintings of the **Official Index to Crisis** and **Official Index to Crisis Crossovers**. Other features include a look at post-**Crisis** events and an explanation of how Superboy could still be the inspiration for the formation of the Legion of Super-Heroes despite having been erased from DC continuity.

● **Crisis** was conceived to slim down DC's superhero lineup because it was assumed readers (and maybe writers) were confused by multiple versions of heroes on various "alternate" Earths. But hardcore fans resented the simplification which brought together Silver Age and Golden Age characters as well as ex-Charlton and Fawcett heroes. **Crisis** also featured the deaths of the original Supergirl and the Barry Allen Flash as well as many lesser DC characters.

DARK Horse is expanding its line collecting licensed material originated by other publishers. Joining ***Classic Star Wars*** *and* ***Magnus, Robot Fighter*** *is* ***Tarzan: The Joe Kubert Years****, a hardcover series reprinting stories the acclaimed* ***Sgt Rock*** *artist wrote as well as drew between 1972 and 1975. The title kicks off on October 26 with a 200-page $49.95 volume reprinting issues #207 to 214 of DC's* ***Tarzan****. A Dark Horse spokesman told* ***CI*** *there are currently no plans to reprint any of DC's other* ***Tarzan*** *stories or strips from* ***Korak, Son of Tarzan*** *or* ***Weird Worlds****, its other Edgar Rice Burroughs titles.*

Transformers resurface at IDW



THE Robots in Disguise have found a new comicbook home scant months after the collapse of Canada's DreamWave, publisher of their previous titles.

Hasbro has awarded its Transformers licence to IDW, which plans to relaunch the franchise in October with a 24-page issue #0. This 99¢ one-shot features a 16-page story together with interviews and pin-ups. It sets the scene for the six-issue **Transformers: Infiltration**, which premieres in January.

The series, priced at $2.99 an issue rather than IDW's standard $3.99, is written by **Transformers** legend Simon Furman and drawn by EJ Su, who has previously worked on **Micronauts** and **GI Joe vs Transformers II**.

Prelude to Infiltration reintroduces the Transformers mythos from the ground up, according to IDW editor-in-chief Chris Ryall, who said the San Diego-based publisher is not intending to continue stories from either the Marvel or DreamWave **Transformers** titles. "We want to return a sense of wonder to these characters and tell stories that appeal to people who have been there from the start as well as people who might never have picked up a **Transformers** comic before.

"Our initial **Transformers** book will be a stripped-down, rebuilt, rebooted title that explores the world of the Transformers and just what they've been doing here on our planet," Ryall added. "They are Robots in Disguise, after all, and we're going to return them to deep cover. At first..."

Punisher star debuts with Image SF series

AFTER portraying a comicbook hero on the big screen, Thomas Jane is embarking on a career in comics.

The Punisher star is joining forces with **30 Days of Night** writer Steve Niles to form Raw Entertainment, which they have established to create not only comicbook properties but also independent horror movies.

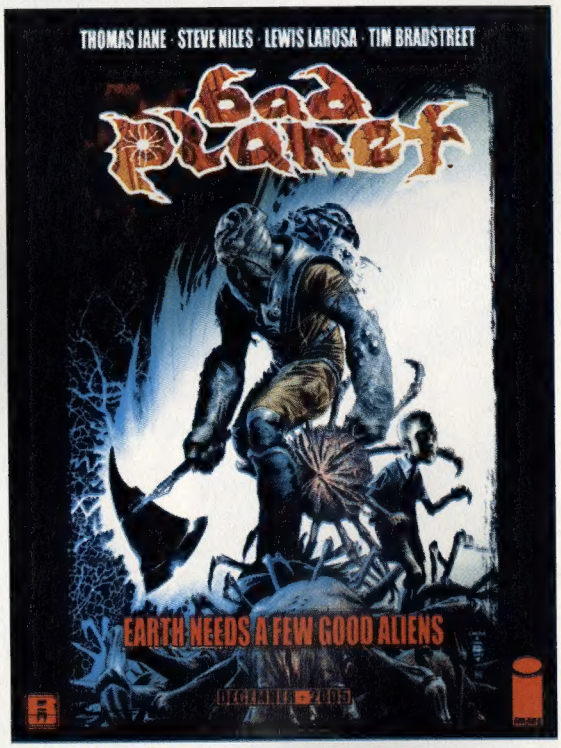
First up under the Raw banner is the Niles and Jane-written **Bad Planet**. A six-parter, it debuts from Image in December.

Jane is knowledgably enthusiastic about his first foray into comics: "I wanted to create a book that I would have loved to have discovered on the shelf at my local comic store – a book in the tradition of the fantastic pulps of the 1940s; the EC comics of the '50s; the **Creepy**, **Eerie** and **Blazing Combat**s of the '60s and '70s; and **Twisted Tales** and **Alien Worlds** from the '80s and '90s by Bruce Jones."

Bad Planet is illustrated by Lewis LaRosa – who drew the first six issues of **The Punisher** for Marvel's MAX Comics imprint – and **Punisher** and **Hellblazer** cover artist Tim Bradstreet, who said, "It's a concept that has its roots in the old EC style horror and sci-fi comics which were a huge influence for all of us."

The story begins when a Near Earth Object (NEO) splits into two – one half crash-landing in South Africa and the other in Washington, DC. Emerging the downed craft swarm a race of arachnid-like aliens against which humanity finds itself powerless. The invaders prey on mankind and use Earth as a nest for their thousands of eggs.

The Bad Planet is Earth and its only salvation may be a lone alien warrior who has two major obstacles to overcome: he is an escaped prisoner and his intergalactic captors are en route to reclaim him, and mankind wants to kill him.



Above: Lewis LaRosa and Tim Bradstreet's promo art for ***Bad Planet****.*

Straczynski plans spin-offs

WITH **Supreme Power** now on hiatus prior to its relaunch as a Marvel Knights title in February, writer J. Michael Straczynski is taking the opportunity to spotlight some of the leading lights of the MAX series he and artist Gary Franks launched in 2003.

Cover art for the first issues of two five-part ***Supreme Power*** *spin-offs –* ***Nighthawk*** *[above, by Steve Dillon] and* ***Hyperion*** *[top, Terry Dodson].*

The core comic features an updated version of the Squadron Supreme, an analogue to DC's Justice League of America first seen in 1971's **Avengers** #85. Having already endorsed a six-parter focusing on the team's Green Lantern – Dr Spectrum – the writer is turning his attention to its Superman and Batman aka Hyperion and Nighthawk.

Both heroes are getting their own five-issue $2.99 MAX series, although Straczynski is writing only **Hyperion**, which premieres on September 21. Pencilled by **Captain America**'s Dan Jurgens, this tells how the superbeing from another planet becomes prey for four new superpowered individuals; each based on a character from the original Squadron Supreme.

Nighthawk debuts two weeks earlier, written by Daniel Way – the controversial author of Marvel's aborted **Gun Theory** – and drawn by **Preacher**'s Steve Dillon, who worked with him on **Bullseye: Greatest Hits**. It follows the hero as he tracks a serial killer who is slaughtering the people of Chicago wholesale. But this beast may be a manifestation of what the murder of his parents could have driven Nighthawk to become.

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Original Maid of Steel regains own title

ALTHOUGH writer Peter David's **Supergirl** was highly acclaimed, its star had a convoluted background and the title's 2003 cancellation left the way clear for DC to hand the name over to a more franchise-friendly heroine.

It did this by restoring its original Maid of Steel, Superman's cousin Kara Zor-El, to the DC Universe. She returned in the six-issue serial *The Supergirl from Krypton*, which began in 2004's **Superman/Batman** #8.

The story was written by Jeph Loeb, who is relaunching Supergirl in her own title, which he set up via a standalone story in May's **Superman/Batman** #19. A one-off being reprinted as **Supergirl** #0, it was illustrated by Ian (**Cable**) Churchill and his regular inker Norm Rapmund, who are also drawing the new title.

"I was and still am a huge fan of what Peter David did with the character," Loeb stressed. "Say what you will, 80 issues of any book is something to take notice of. He built a world, populated with characters and I really respect that."

Kid Flash or Robin

"This book is different," the writer stated. "Kara Zor-El knows who she is. She knows the awesome responsibility it is to wear the 'S'. The trick for her now is to figure out if she wants to live in her much more famous cousin's shadow or break out on her own. Does Kid Flash wish he were the Flash? Does Robin get up every morning and think about how he'd be Batman? Those are different ways of playing a younger version of an icon."

Loeb says one aspect of the series looks at how Supergirl deals with the change in her relationship with her cousin now that he is older than her. A teenager when Krypton blew up, she was trapped for years in suspended animation while the baby Kal-El rocketed straight to Earth.

Baby no longer

"She came to Earth essentially to look after this baby who was sent at the same time," Loeb explained. "But her rocket got wedged into a huge chunk of the planet and it has taken years to get here. When she arrives, the baby isn't a baby, he's Superman – the greatest hero the universe has ever known. And as a teenager who has lost everything in her past, this is quite the monkey wrench.

"It may be part of the reason why, at least at first, she'll be hesitant to spend too much time with Superman," he added. "She was supposed to take care of him, not the other way around."

*Pictured: Ian Churchill and Norm Rapmund cover art for issue #2 of DC's relaunched **Supergirl** series [above] and for **Supergirl** #0 [left].*

● The original Supergirl was introduced in **Action Comics** #252 [1958] by Otto Binder and Al Plastino. She died in **Crisis on Infinite Earths** #7 [1985].

***Supergirl** #0 and **Supergirl** #1, priced $2.99 each, ship August 10.*

*KEITH (**Lobo**) Giffen is following his aborted run on **Thanos** with a stab at another Marvel character created by writer/artist Jim Starlin. He is now turning his attention to Thanos's nemesis, who is to star in his own four-parter. Kicking off on September 28, **Drax the Destroyer** is drawn by Image's **Phantom Jack** artist Mitch Breitweiser [first issue cover art, above]. The $2.99 mini also features Paibok the Power Skrull, Lunatik and the Blood Brothers, who – together with Drax – are unleashed on Earth when their interstellar prison transport crash-lands in Alaska.*

Image Fell from Warren Ellis

WARREN Ellis's new Image series is something of a throwback to earlier times, at least according to executive editor Eric Stephenson.

Discussing **Fell**, an ongoing series illustrated by **30 Days of Night**'s Ben Templesmith, Eric Stephenson proclaimed, "After years of 'decompressed' story-telling, it's kind of refreshing to see something as dense as this. It's a type of storytelling comics used to really excel at – whether we're talking about eight-page EC stories, Will Eisner's *Spirit*, classic **2000 AD** and **Warrior** or even some of those 17-page stories that were being published in the '70s. People forget that creators like Chris Claremont, Frank Miller, Steve Gerber, Don MacGregor and Steve Englehart were doing some amazing work within that 17-page format."

Back matter

Ellis, whose extensive credits include **Transmetropolitan**, **Ultimate Fantastic Four** and **Planetary** says each issue of **Fell** runs to 24 pages featuring a 16-page story together with "several pages of what's called back matter – text stuff, sketches, background material, perhaps even audience emails as we get going. And it retails for $1.99 American."

"Further, each issue is a self-contained story," he stated. "If you read them all, you'll see ideas and relationships develop. But there's nothing stopping you entering the series at any time, understanding the set-up and getting a complete experience out of it. It's no harder to walk in on than any episode of *Law and Order*."

Feral district

Fell tells the story of Detective Richard Fell, who is transferred over the bridge from the big city to Snowtown, a feral district where the police roster numbers three-and-a-half people: one detective has no legs.

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*Above: A frame from Ben Templesmith promo art for Image's **Fell**.*

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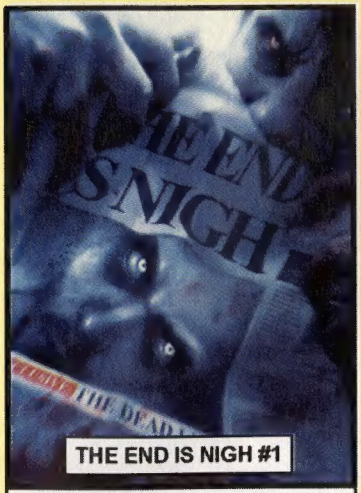

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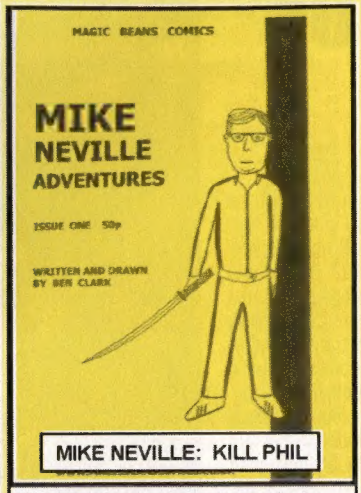

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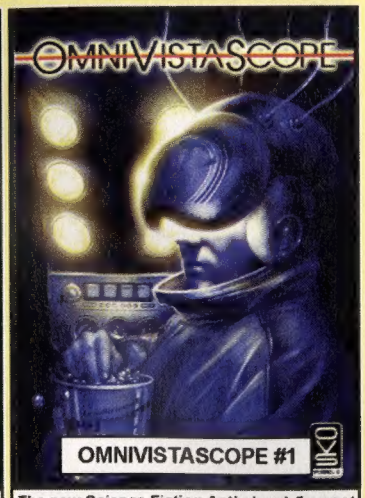

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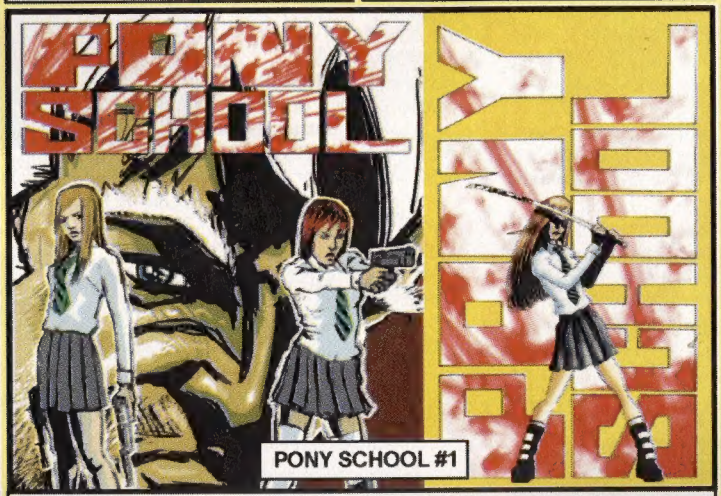

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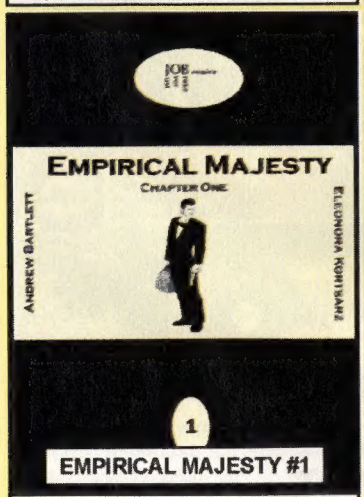

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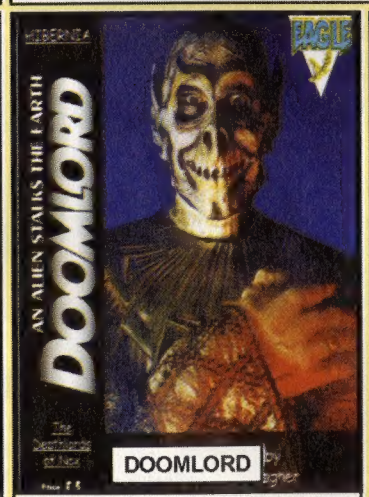

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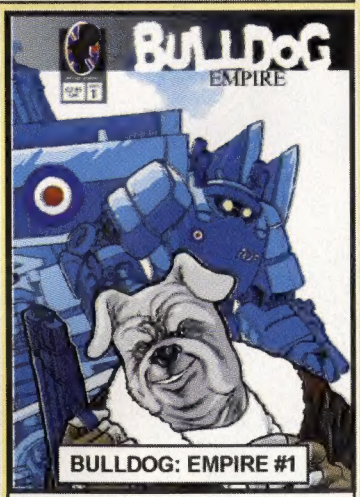

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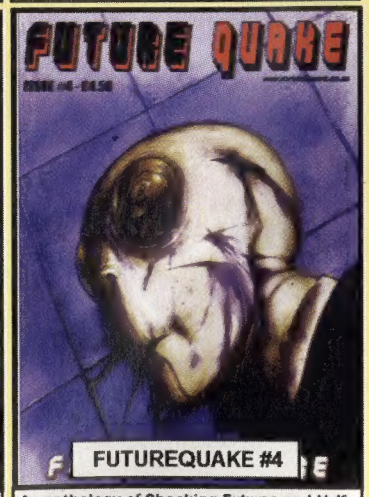

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Question of faith for Spider-Man team

PAUL Jenkins and Humberto Ramos are reuniting for a Dark Horse six-parter that takes a look at the murky goings on behind closed doors in the smallest sovereign state in the world.

The writer and artist responsible for the 2003 relaunch of **Spectacular Spider-Man** are collaborating on **Revelations**, which, Jenkins told **CI**, is a mystery set against the backdrop of the Vatican.

Jenkins, who wrote **Batman: Jekyll and Hyde** for DC, explained that Ramos came up with the initial idea about three years ago. "He is actually quite a staunch Catholic while I'm not – I'm a complete bloody heathen. He really wanted to write about this subject matter, to investigate aspects of his own faith and so on. We constructed a really interesting set of twists and also an interesting dilemma for the main character, who is a lapsed Catholic who ends up witnessing some things that begin to make him question his lack of faith."

Charlie Northern is the star of **Revelations**. One of Scotland Yard's top detectives, he is asked by an old friend, a cardinal, to investigate the suspicious death of a high-ranking Vatican official, a likely successor to the Pope. Travelling to Rome, he learns dark and ancient forces at work in The Holy See want him to fail.

Jenkins' CV contains several titles that – if not classified as horror – at least have supernatural overtones. Among these are **The Darkness**, **Werewolf by Night** and **Spawn the Undead** but he feels **Revelations** is most readily comparable with his work on **Hellblazer**, the Vertigo series on which he considers himself to be the forgotten writer. "I did stories that were very, very different from the way that other people had portrayed John Constantine. I didn't really show him as an unrelenting bastard so much; I had him as a 42-year-old man realising that he'd come out of the punk era and was growing up... like a lot of the people I knew.

"He was a little bit less of a wide boy in my run," stated the writer. "I'm not so sure how well it was received. Probably okay; probably some of the people wanted the bastard back but I developed certain chops with certain characters and I kind of translated that through to Charlie Northern in **Revelations**."

According to Jenkins, whose credits also include **Origin** and **Incredible Hulk**, an underlying theme of the six-parter is that every time you think you know what is going on, you don't. It is, he said, about a guy who questions his faith, brought in to an environment where those questions are magnified.

> ***"Every Catholic priest you see in a comic is going to be a child-molesting maniac."***
> *. . . Paul Jenkins, writer*

Returning to his **Hellblazer** run, the writer said, "One of the things I railed against was that I felt comics at the time were presenting things in a way that was just as cliched as any other. I don't mean to say that comics were cliched but I did feel that there were certain aspects such as every time you see a Catholic priest in a comic he is going to be a child-molesting maniac. I understand that that's very popular and very interesting and a load of fun for people to write about but at a certain point you have to question the validity of that point of view. A lot of times a Catholic priest is a really nice guy, who really believes in what he does.

"I felt that, if I'm gonna write about the real world, which I'm really interested in, then I needed to portray both sides," he added. "I followed that in **Hellblazer** with some people being ordinary – not everybody was special – and I find them to be every bit as interesting."

Religious politics

"Fast forward to **Revelations** where there's this entire set up of the Vatican – it's this madness," Jenkins continued. "Obviously in a place like the Vatican, religious politics are at their highest, their most intense. So, yes, there are some problems with the religion and the way that it's organised. But, against that backdrop, you've got fairly ordinary people, who truly believe in what it is that they're doing."

"In **Revelations**, as I said earlier, every time you think you know what's going on you don't," restated the London-born writer who now resides in Georgia. "With that in mind, don't expect it to be an attack on the Catholic Church because it has nothing to do with that. It's an examination of the good, the bad and the mediocre of the Catholic Church."

Avoiding the question as to whether the series' title was in any way an allusion to **The Bible**'s *Book of Revelation* and its apocalyptic prophecies of the End of Days, Jenkins explained that every issue contains major revelations for Northern.

The writer says the story is an examination of the nature of faith. "It's not just about faith in terms of religion and belief and so on, it's also a question of faith in, say, police procedure and stuff like that. When Charlie begins to investigate all of this stuff, he begins to realise that the basic workings of police procedure some times are not applying in this case."

Above and below: Humberto Ramos pages from the first $2.99 issue of Dark Horse's ***Revelations*** *six-parter, which ships on August 31.*

Sentry is back

ALTHOUGH he insists he is a 'never-go-back' guy, writer Paul Jenkins is set to return to the character he and Jae Lee – the artist he collaborated with on **Inhumans** – introduced into the Marvel Universe in 2000.

Explaining his reasons for making an exception by coming back to the hero Marvel has dubbed the Golden Guardian of Good, the writer told **CI**, "The Sentry is different not only because I created him but also because I barely scratched the surface with him."

Originally promoted as the superhero Stan Lee and artist "Artie Rosen" purportedly created before the Fantastic Four was conceived by Lee and Jack Kirby, the Sentry resurfaces on September 28 in his own $2.99 eight-parter drawn by John (**Black Panther**) Romita Jr.

While **Revelations** *[see main story]* and **The Sentry** will run almost concurrently, Jenkins is also developing a longer term project for Marvel.

He is working on **Mythos**, a line of one-offs that will retell the origins of Marvel's most iconic heroes, meshing Lee's original telling with the movie version. These are to be painted by Marvel cover artist Paolo Rivera, who drew the Jenkins-written **Spectacular Spider-Man** #14.

Eight initial titles are lined up, the first unscheduled one featuring the X-Men.

Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, Daredevil and the Hulk are among those earmarked to follow.

Above: John Romita Jr cover art for the first issue of Marvel's ***Sentry*** *eight-parter.*

Striker's resurrection

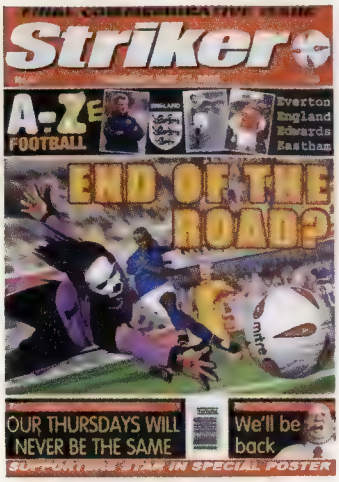
THINGS are looking good for the return of Britain's leading computer-generated soccer comic, but not as a standalone title.

Although the situation looked bleak following the recent cancellation of his **Striker** title, Pete Nash, head of Striker 3D, is currently in negotiations to return the strip to its roots as a daily newspaper strip. "It's now looking more likely than not that *Striker* will return in a newspaper for the start of the new football season. The need for confidentiality prevents us from naming either of the two papers we have been talking to, but the signs are certainly encouraging," he announced.

"It could represent a major turning point as a deal would provide a secure income and the opportunity to expand our range of merchandise and commercial spin-offs, including mobile phone downloads and the long-awaited 3D virtual tours. Discussions are at an advanced stage but it will probably be mid-July before we can announce the outcome."

● Created by Nash and launched by him in **The Sun** as a traditionally drawn strip in 1985, *Striker* became the world's first computer-generated cartoon strip in March 1998. It lasted three weeks, with teething troubles preventing the new look being made permanent until the end of that year.

After quitting the newspaper, Nash launched **Striker** as a weekly title in 2003. It lasted 87 issues, ending in May this year.



***Striker* #87** [cover above] *was the last issue of the computer-generated soccer comic but the title strip may soon return.*

Buffy's Spike returns

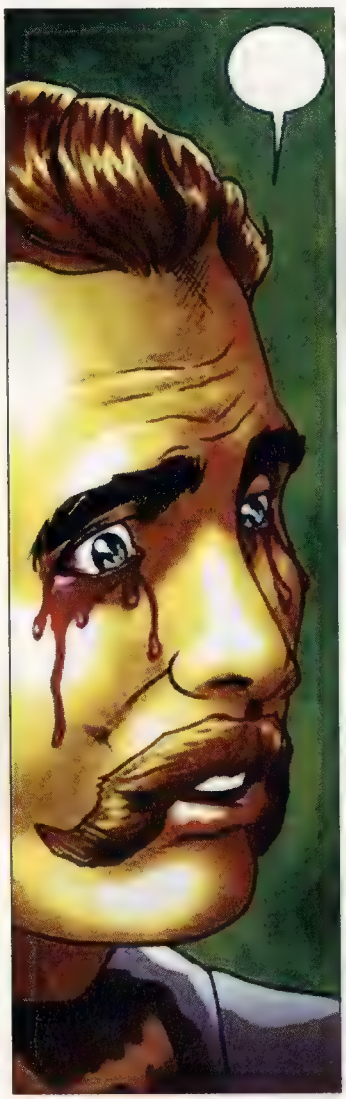
HAVING recently secured the comicbook rights to the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* spin-off, *Angel*, IDW has obtained the licence to another character from Joss Whedon's TV series.

The San Diego-based publisher is adding **Spike** to its growing list of licenced titles, kicking off the franchise with a 48-pager that confirms that Halfrek and Cecily – both played by Kali Rocha in *Buffy* – are two aspects of the same person.

Old Times is drawn by newcomer Fernando Goni and written by **Incredible Hulk**'s Peter David, who said, "Set in the current day – that is 'current day' a couple of years ago, Season 6 of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in fact – the story includes flashbacks to the past that sets up the exploration of the relationship between vampire Spike and the vengeance demon named Halfrek, who indirectly led to Spike becoming a vampire."

But David is not only confirming Cecily and Halfrek are indeed one-and-the-same; he is going so far as to reveal that they always were. "Cecily/Halfrek was a demon when she first met William – as Spike was then known – in 1880. In fact, she's been a demon for a long time... and we'll get some indication as to how and why she became one."

Old Times deals with Spike's feelings towards Cecily and how the two have changed over the years and their feelings toward one another. "Let's just say there are a lot of unresolved feelings there."



*Above: Fernando Goni interior art from IDW's **Spike: Old Times** 48-pager. It ships on August 17, priced $7.49.*

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SF author follows up on Moore's Top 10

PAUL Di Filippo has the unenviable task of creating a sequel to one of Alan Moore's own creations.

The SF author – whose credits include **The Steampunk Trilogy** and **Fuzzy Dice** – is making his comics debut with **Beyond the Farthest Precinct**, a WildStorm/America's Best Comics five-parter that picks up five years after the acclaimed British writer's **Top 10** left off.

Describing the basic concept of the series, which is illustrated by **The Power of Shazam!**'s Jerry Ordway, Di Filippo told **CI**, "The cops of Neopolis have to contend with a paranormal entity who threatens not only their timeline but the whole multiverse, while also contending with house-hunting, giant catfish, familial deaths, new cruisers, infidelity and love affairs."

Di Filippo was recommended for the project by Warren Ellis and Harlan Ellison. He says there was little interference in his story, either from Moore or from editor Scott Dunbier: "I'm solely responsible for everything you'll see on the page, writing-wise. This was a daunting assignment, and I hope I've done honour to the **Top 10** legacy. As far as editorial intervention by Alan, he objected to precisely one thing: I had killed off a certain character whom he wanted to live. I tinkered with the climax in book five a little, and, voila, the character lived."

Addressing the prospect of following in the footsteps of a writer many laud as the greatest ever to have worked in comics, Di Filippo said, "As for continuing the franchise, I felt honoured to be allowed to play with Alan's creations and contribute additions of my own. The work was so much fun, I didn't feel apprehensive at the time and it's only as publication nears that I worry a little about the fans reception to my work."

Jerry Ordway art for the cover to ***Top 10: Beyond the Farthest Precinct*** *#2* [above] *and for a double-page spread from the first issue of the WildStorm five-parter* [top].

Edgar Rice Burroughs

Asked if the series subtitle was in any way an allusion to Tarzan creator Edgar Rice Burroughs' **Beyond the Farthest Star,** Di Filippo responded, "It's meant to have connotations similar to the Burroughs title, but it has a literal meaning as well, as the officers are asked to travel off the multiversal map."

Set in the city of Neopolis, with – as the writer put it – a side-trip to the world of Grand Central, **Beyond the Farthest Precinct** introduces several new officers who have joined the station crew since the conclusion of **Top 10** with 2001's #12. "Additionally, a new political regime in the city brings new headaches. As for the characters, their motivations remain consistent from the old books: basically, they're all just trying to do a good job as cops and deal with their personal lives.

"As with the first series, I'm aiming for a blend of comedy and tragedy. Part of Alan's genius was in making the reader care about the fates of essentially absurdist, over-the-top heroes and I've tried for the same effect. At the same time, I want the story to move like lightning, be suspenseful, exciting and unpredictable," added Di Filippo.

Top 10: Beyond the Farthest Precinct #1, *priced $2.99, ships on August 17.*

Style Council inspires Long Hot Summer

MUSIC seems to play a major role in Eric Stephenson's work.

The Image executive director gained his inspiration for **Four Letter Words** – his 144-page Image anthology that shipped in January – from the Echobelly song of the same name while his latest graphic novel was sparked by the 'No matter what I do, I end up hurting you.' line from the chorus to *Long Hot Summer*.

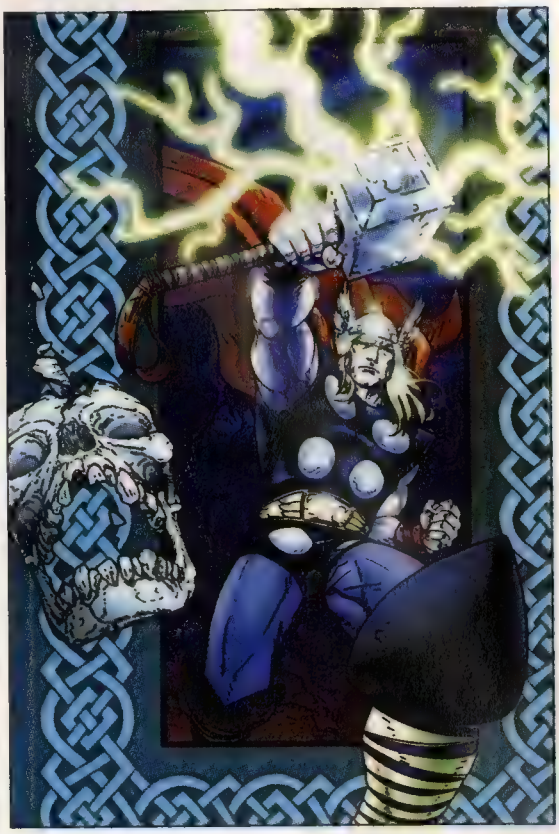
*Above: The cover to the **Long Hot Summer**; art by James McKelvie. The $7.99 graphic novel ships from Image on September 14.*

Named after the Style Council song, his new Image 96-pager is illustrated in black and white by James McKelvie, a contributor to **Four Letter Words**. It is, **CI** was told by Stephenson, a story of boy meets girl, girl meets boy's best friend and everyone lives unhappily ever after.

Set towards the end of the 1980s SoCal Mod scene, **Long Hot Summer** is "a fictional account of some things that really happened around that time.

"Things started winding down toward the middle of the '80s but the scene kept going and there were little pockets of Mods all over the place. We're dealing with one of those pockets here, specifically two friends – Steve and Ken – and we're basically tracing the events that lead to the dissolution of their friendship.

"The other main character is, Ashley, the girl who comes between them," continued Stephenson, who added that the theme of his novel was "Do unto others as you would have done unto you."



*MARVEL'S Thunder God is to regain his own title – albeit only for six issues – written by the man who brought Thor's last series to its 2004 conclusion. Bringing a touch of his own **Hammer of the Gods** comic to **Blood Oath** is Michael Avon Oeming, whose* Tales of Asgard*-style storyline sends Thor and the Warriors Three on an impossible journey. Drawn by **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes** artist Scott Kolins, the $2.99 mini launches on September 14.*

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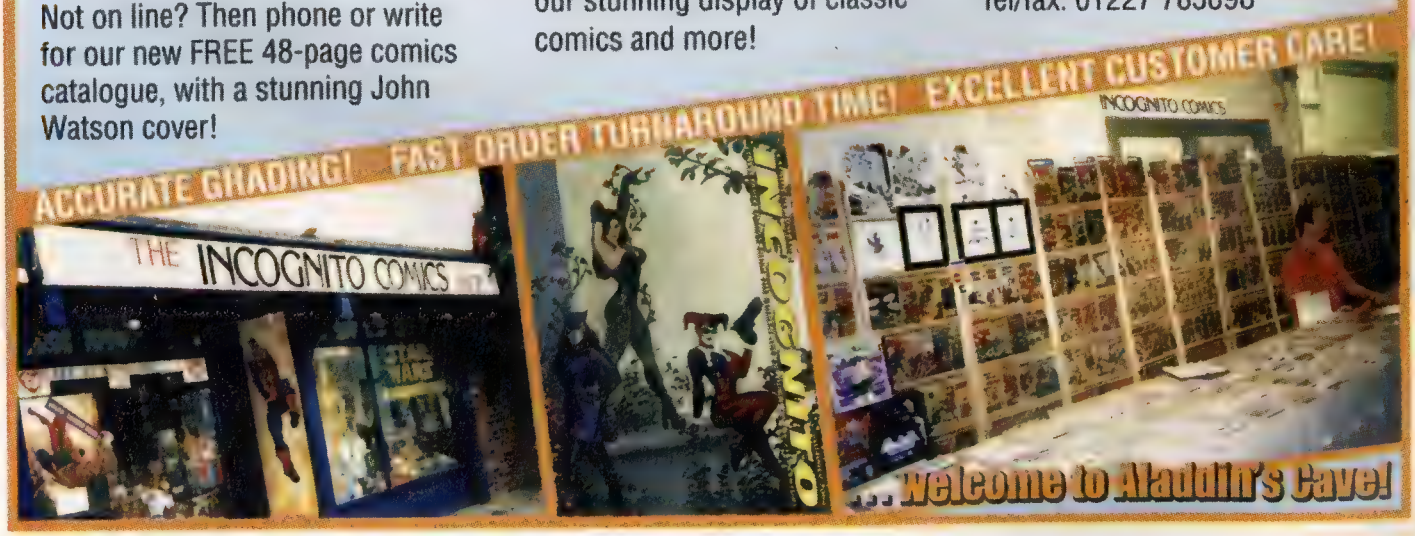

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DIRECTOR Rupert Wainwright's remake of John Carpenter's 1980 film, The Fog *opens in the US on October 14. A fortnight later Dark Horse is releasing an 88-pager that reveals the secret of the supernatural curse that inflicts Antonio Bay. Written by* ***The Devil's Footprints*** *Scott Allie in collaboration with Carpenter,* ***The Fog*** *graphic novel* [Mike Mignola cover art, above] *is set over 100 years ago when an unholy terror followed a group of Chinese traders to the small Californian seaside town. "This book's a remarkable extension of the story that Debra Hill and I created, true to the terror of the film and the EC Comics that inspired it," stated Carpenter. The $6.95 softcover, which is in the 5¼x7½" digest format, is drawn by relative newcomer Todd Herman, a contributor to the recently published* ***Dark Horse Book of the Dead****.*

Superman meets Captain Marvel

AFTER almost 20 years DC is finally to reveal the story of how Captain Marvel and Superman originally met.

It has been assumed that the two heroes knew each other prior to their first post-**Crisis on Infinite Earths** encounter [in **Legends** #5, 1987] but no reference has ever been made to how that was possible. Having already chronicled a more recent meeting between Earth's Mightiest Mortal and the Last Son of Krypton in *Lightning Strikes* – April's Superman three-parter – **The Outsiders** writer Judd Winick is now planning to plug that hole in DC Universe history along with **NYX** artist Josh Middleton.

A continuity implant consisting of four 40-page issues, Winick and Middleton's **Shazam!/Superman: First Thunder** brings the Big Red Cheese and the Man of Steel together to tackle a mysterious cult that is stealing ancient artifacts held in museums in Metropolis and Fawcett City.

Shazam!/Superman: First Thunder *#1, priced $3.50, ships on September 8.*

Above: Josh Middleton's cover art for the first issue of DC's ***Shazam!/Superman: First Thunder*** *four-parter.*

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GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

One reason for holding the new Comic Expo in Brighton is that it has the country's largest arts community outside of London, itself only 50 miles away. The organisers believe that this huge catchment area can offer a massive increase in attendence over previous events, provided sufficient outreach promotion is put in place so they know the event is taking place...

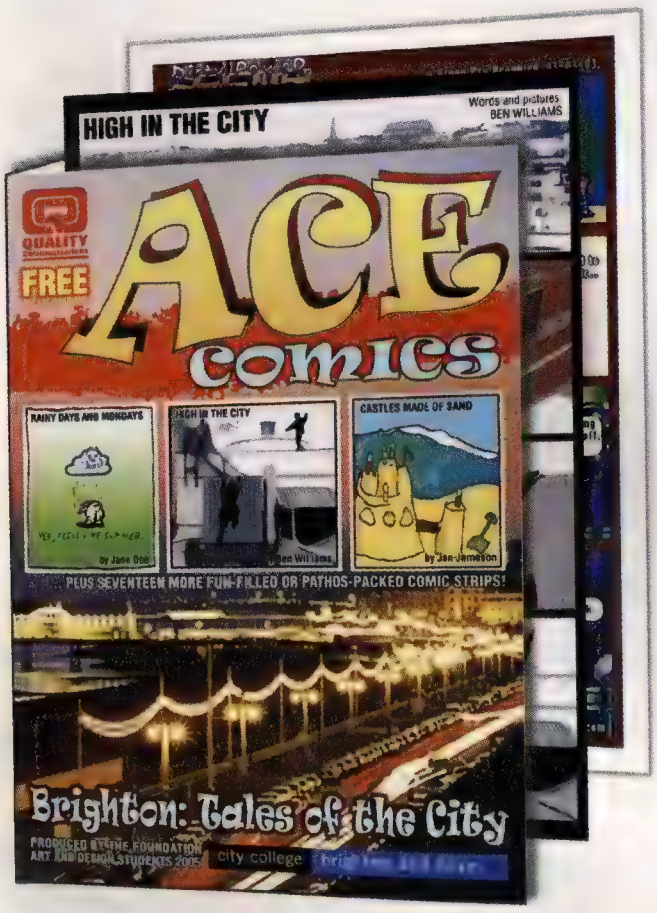
LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION

Dressed as superheroes (courtesy of local fancy dress shop *Revamp*), an attention-grabbing Comic Expo team is to distribute 50,000 leaflets in key locations around Brighton.

Promoting the valuables side of the industry as an eye-catcher for non-fans, and ex-readers, its flip side is headed *What's It Worth*, suggesting people search out their old comics and toys and bring them along to the event.

A panel of experts will be sited in booths at the registration area, offering a Collectables Valuation Service to the public who take up this offer. Certificates authenticating value will be completed and given to those with rare items who, if they wish, can then register and offer for sale their buried gems to the attending dealer exhibitors, and also discover what they have been missing as they walk around the bustling hall.

This event alone is already attracting major interest from local and national radio, TV and print news media.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HIGH IN THE CITY
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Brighton: Tales of the City
PRODUCED BY THE FOUNDATION ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS 2005
city college

NEW WAVE AT THE SEASIDE

Discovering an untapped market of comics-aware teenagers, Comic Expo's Dez Skinn has been working with the Foundation Art & Design students of City College Brighton and Hove, lecturing, assessing, encouraging and cajoling.

Proving that comics are not the sole domain of the established publishers, often with limited vision, the project has been enthusiastically greeted by students, resulting in 25 of them producing story and art for a new comic being published this September by Quality Communications, in association with the Ace Comics chain of specialist outlets.

Disproving accepted demographics for the industry, 15 of the 25 contributors are female, and none of the material is either superhero or manga influenced in the slightest. What these students realise, by instinct, is that comics is a story-telling medium for whatever ideas, reality-based or otherwise, they wish to develop.

The end product, a 20,000 copy 32 page full colour comic is being distributed around the city in the eight weeks prior to Comic Expo as a giveaway.

Along with a large colourful Comic Expo window poster, copies of **Ace Comics** are being placed in bars, restaurants, cafes, stations, surgeries, hairdressers and anywhere else people sit and wait, to be read there or taken home.

As the contributing students have shown, comics should be for everybody, not just for fans!

Table/booth bookings now open: www.comicexpo.biz Or telephone: 0117 924 4655

STREET WIDTH BANNER ADVERTISING: BRIGHTON SHOPPING CENTRES

Huge banners are being made for hanging across major Brighton shopping areas, including the pedestrianised North Lanes area (pictured, right) which attracts a flowthrough of thousands of tourists, students and shoppers every day.

LAMPPOST BANNER ADVERTISING: TRUNK ROADS & BRIGHTON SEAFRONT

A series of banners measuring almost 7ft x 2.5ft (2m x .8m) are being booked to cover major trunk roads linking Brighton to London and Gatwick International airport (A23) and the Brighton seafront and major shopping thoroughfares. These high profile lamppost banners have a potential advertising audience of up to a quarter of a million people in the 14-day build-up to the event itself.

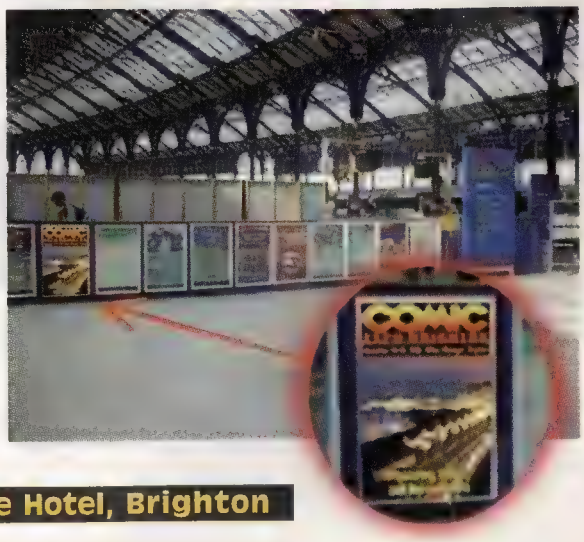
RAC ROAD SIGNS

Flagposting the weekend event, Comic Expo has booked twenty direction markers through the RAC (Royal Automobile Club).

These are to be placed at key points along the route to the seafront Metropole hotel.

POSTER ADVERTISING

In addition to the large high impact posters being displayed within Brighton's high street retailers, 30 double crown posters (measuring 20" x 30") are being placed at key points between the railway stations and the seafront. Back-lit illuminated sites (left) are also being investigated



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Araña writer raises own crop of heroines

HAVING written stories of strong female leads in Image/Top Cow's **Tomb Raider: Arabian Nights**, **No Honor** and **Witchblade: Obakemono** and in Marvel's **Araña: Heart of the Spider**, Fiona Avery is setting up her own publishing house as a showcase for even more fictional femmes.

Lucky Bamboo Productions makes its debut at San Diego's Comic-Con International, which is being held from July 14 to 17. Its first title is **Lucky Bamboo Presents...**, a one-off preview featuring three new heroines.

Describing her three stars, the writer said, "Jerrica Hellfire is a sorceress using the dark arts but she's got a heart of gold. This contradiction is fascinating to me as I write: how can someone be so mercenary and yet always err on the side of good?

"Kusemono, the heroine of *The Way of the Sword*, is a real problem child and yet the Samurai who takes her in reins in her destructive tendencies without cramping her feisty style, so that she becomes a strong character," she added. "And private detective Sam Falcon seems tough as nails on the outside but she has a really sentimental core that no one ever sees – unless you're the lucky reader peeking into her narrative captions."

Lined up as her collaborators on *Hellfire* are former **Lady Death** artist Romano Molenaar and his frequent inker Marco Galli – who worked with the Dutch artist on **BloodRayne: Skies Afire** – while Billy (**X-23**) Tan, who drew her **Tomb Raider: Arabian Nights** and **No Honor**, is illustrating *The Way of the Sword*. Newcomer Len DiSalvo is the artist on *Sam Falcon*.

Although *The Way of the Sword* is set in 16th century Japan, its two companion strips have a modern-day setting.

Avery, who intends to publish only one comic per month, plans to launch her inaugural series next January. Her first three titles are all four-parters. They are to be released in rotation, with one premiering every four months.

Above from left to right: Kusemono by Billy Tan, Sam Falcon by Len DiSalvo and Jerrica Hellfire by Romano Molenaar and Marco Galli. Top: A Hellfire *page from* ***Lucky Bamboo Presents...*** *by Molenaar and Galli.*

ONCE seemingly unassailable at the top of the sales charts and now languishing in the bottom half of the Top 100, Todd McFarlane's ***Spawn*** *hits #150 on September 28. Written by Brian Haberlin and McFarlane, the 48-page anniversary issue, which retails for $4.95, features art by Angel Medina and Danny Miki as well as by* ***Uncanny X-Men****'s Philip Tan* [see above]*, who joins* ***Mutant X*** *writer David Hine as the Image comics' new creative team with #151.*

Another Rainbow co-founder dies

BRUCE Hamilton died Saturday, June 18, after an extended illness that left him hospitalised for the past four months.

In 1981 Hamilton and fellow Disney fan Russ Cochran set up Another Rainbow to publish **The Fine Art of Walt Disney's Donald Duck** by Carl Barks. Two years later it launched the 30-volume **Carl Barks Library** to collect all the famed duck artist's Disney work. Limited edition lithographs of Barks' paintings as well as statues based on Barks' instructions followed.

In 1985, Hamilton founded Gladstone Publishing to produce new Disney comics on a monthly basis. He set up Hamilton Comics, which released such titles as **Grave Tales**, eight years later.

He was also instrumental in a number of other reprint projects including EC Comics, *Dick Tracy* and Marge's *Little Lulu*.

● **Superman/Batman** writer Jeph Loeb's son Sam died aged 17 on Thursday, June 16 after a three-year battle with cancer.

A writer himself, he had just begun his own comics career with a story in 2004's **Tales of the Vampire** #5 for Dark Horse.

CI #185 competition winners

IN **CI** #185, 10 readers were each offered the opportunity to each win signed copies of Knockabout Palmano Bennett's Brian Boiland hardcover, **Bolland Strips**. The winners were:

Jan Barker, Prestonpans
Oliver Davies, Clitheroe
Ashley Edwards, East Ashling
S Geburtig, Barr Hill, Cambs
Peter Hardy, Manchester
Paul Middleton, Basingstoke
Tony McVeigh, Dromiskin
Martin Oakley, Enfield
Adam Paga, Huddersfield
Francis Steiner, London NW8

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (22.3%)
2 Reviews (10.5%)
3 News Roundup (9.5%)
4 World of Jack Staff strip (7.1%)
5 Frame to Frame (5.8%)
6 Sez Dez (5.4%)
7 Advance Listings (5.0%)
8 NetWorks (4.6%)
9 Comment (4.2%)
10 Novel Graphics (3.9%)

You must've already heard about **Albion**, as its preview scored only 2.8%. The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was "None, they're all fine" – amazing at 34.1%, with Directory second at 21.2% and Comics Economics third at 10.6%. For once you liked all the columns then!

In Brief

SCOTTISH crime novelist Denise Mina is to replace Mike Carey as writer of **Hellblazer** as of issue #216, which ships next January.

"My feeling is that she will be bringing it a little more down to earth," editor Jonathan Vankin remarked. "You won't be seeing quite as many spectacular demons. It's gonna be a lot more human, a little down and dirty."

Mina, when offered the assignment, had responsed, "I would eat my own guts to write **Hellblazer**." The now-gutless writer is to be joined on the series by a new ongoing artist although, bizarrely, DC is keeping their identity a secret.

AFTER their maiden appearance in their own 2004 Image 48-pager, the mother and daughter superheroines created by Jay Faerber and artist Andres Ponce are migrating to Digital Webbing for a one-off adventure in its flagship anthology.

Shipping in September, the $2.95 **Digital Webbing Presents** #25 stars Firebirds as well as *The Last Paladin* and *Mask of the Gargoyle.*

BLACK Industries, the role-playing game imprint of Games Workshop's Black Library Publishing, has signed a deal to produce a superhero role-playing game featuring the DC Universe characters.

The currently unscheduled RPG takes the place of the West End Games' version, which has been out of print for over three years following the manufacturer's collapse.

It is a counterpart to ***HeroClix*** – WizKids' DC Comics-based collectable miniatures game – and Upper Deck's DC-based collectable card game.

AFTER writing the adaptation of **Homeland**, the first book in R A Salvatore's **Dark Elf Trilogy**, Andrew Dabb is homing in on another trio of fantasy novels, this one a spin-off from a classic role playing game now owned by Hasbro.

In collaboration with Steve (**G.I. Joe**) Kurth, and again for Devil's Due, he is to adapt Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman's **Dragonlance Chronicles**. An eight-parter, the $2.95 series based on the 1984 first book, **Dragons of Autumn Twilight**, premieres in August.

IMAGE is going back to print for a second time on the first $2.95 issue of the latest series from the creators of **Ultra**.

The third printing of the Luna Brothers' **Girls** #1 is to feature a sketch version of the second edition cover. A second printing of **Girls** #2 – sporting a new cover by Jonathan Luna – is also on its way.

Russians jump from Vertigo

Soviet super-soldiers announced by DC's mature readers imprint appear at WildStorm

AFTER three years in limbo, writer Brett Lewis's saga of the post-Communism fate of a group of Russian superheroes has finally surfaced but not with its expected publisher.

Announced in 2002 as coming from Vertigo the following year, **The Winter Men** is to premiere from WildStorm on August 10.

Bulletproof Monk

Previewed in 2003's **Vertigo X**, the $2.99 eight-parter is drawn by **Static** artist John Paul Leon, whose credits also include **Earth X**, **The Further Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix** and **Challengers of the Unknown**.

Describing the background to the series, Lewis, who is best-known as the writer of Image/Flypaper Press's **Bulletproof Monk**, said, "There were a number of Soviet super-soldier programmes in Russia during the Cold War. Now all these uber-men, like the rest of the Spetsnaz – Soviet special forces — have been cut loose to fend for themselves in the violent and crime-ridden post Soviet 'real' world.

"On the simplest level," he added, "this first Winter Men series focuses on a group of former armoured-rocket soldiers who must come back together to stop a former Soviet superhero from consolidating the enormous and complex web of Russian gangs and criminal powers in Moscow and New York."

Eskimo assassin

As for the main characters, the writer – who also contributes to DC's Cartoon Network comics including **Powerpuff Girls** and **Scooby-Doo** – explained, "We start off at the side of Kris Kalenov, a freelance cop working for the shady mayor of Moscow. Among his fellow former rocket men is Drost, a Cossack army lifer now a commander in the Rapid Reaction Corps: a sort of national SWAT – sometimes for hire – reincarnation of Soviet Spetsnaz.

"Then," he continued, "there's Nina – the barricade girl – a high-end bodyguard-for-hire. There's also Nikki Zuko – aka the Yankee-pig fucker, who after the Special Forces, resumed his career as a gang lord. And, last, the Siberian, an Eskimo 'death-maker', that is an assassin.

"And the cast will grow and radiate from them. The setting of the Russian underworld really

"but now that's all faded away, you dismiss it."
"yet another crazy scheme from those quaint old cold war days. all that bullshit and cock comparing. all that paranoia and posturing. all meant to scare you."
"now you look back and laugh at all that. you're sure they could never have been real. our super soldiers exaggerations, warped fantasies."
"all those programs were shut down unsuccessful—and what else would we need them for, anyway?"
"our intelligence told us your germans never gave you an uberman (übermensch) like supre in berlin first—we got all the best germans."
"or but now we are allies. friends. you can read the top secret files of former and middle—we have no secrets left to protect—nothing left worth fighting over—right?"
"but I'll tell you now: they were real. yet was once files the sky-earth heroes. but now they've fallen to earth."

"there were supermen."
PEOPLE ARE PHYSICS! BUT LIFE IS POETRY OF PLANNING! A COMPLEX MATHEMATICAL PUZZLE THAT OUR SOVIET MEN OF SCIENCE HAVE CONQUERED IN THEIR PERFECT WORKER-
"and one-man rocket? ghetto super-things that barely touched the earth."
THE STRENGTH OF THE COLLECTED PEOPLE PERSONIFIED
-AND ALWAYS AT HIS SIDE- THE HEROIC EVERY-SOLDIERS OF THE ALL-POSSIBLE INDUSTRIAL FUTURE!
"we called them a deterrent measure against the threat of your super-human weapons." "they were to protect us—"
AND WITNESS! AS HE CUTS THROUGH THE HOARDING CAPITALIST FORCES- -SHIELDING THE DREAM OF THE WORKERS PARADISE FROM WARMONGERING WESTERN PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE!
"and they were to be just the beginning."

Pictured: Pages 2 [above] *and 3* [below] *from the first issue of WildStorm's eight-part* ***The Winter Men****; art by John Paul Leon.*

makes its own gravy as far as for colourful characters go," added Lewis, who said he wanted **Winter Men** to be a character driven story.

Popeye Doyle

"Kalenov's motivations are really the strongest through-line of this story arc," proclaimed the writer, a contributor to Vertigo's **Weird Western**. "He's the Popeye Doyle, the Jake Gittes. He is not what we would consider a very nice guy. He's made some really terrible mistakes and blames himself for even some things he didn't do. In doing this one good thing he thinks perhaps he can revise some of his past or maybe this is just his last chance to try and be something more than what he's ended up.

"I don't mean to make it too mysterious," the writer declared. "He drinks and chases women and as the Russians say 'doesn't use much care'."

Lewis, who says the series grew out of an aborted proposal for a Soviet Superman *Elseworlds* story, said he has spent a great deal of time researching the crime scene in Russia. "Nowadays I read declassified KGB manuals and drink vodka in Russian clubs in Hollywood. I guess that's why I do what I do. Can't think of another job where you can have tea with a gangster and write it off on your taxes."

With regard to the setting, the writer stated, "It's an incredible, crazy world: Russian crime... stranger than fiction. Every time I think I've invented something new and perverse, I see an article in the **Times** that tops it.

"I mean it's like our post Civil War Wild West over there... rapid and often violent commercial expansion... disenfranchised warriors adrift in an amoral world... war and genocide," Lewis, also author of **Man against Time** and **The Engraver**, explained. "Except the Soviet Union was the most intensely militarised country on Earth and their criminal world is built on the infrastructure of the most elaborate espionage network in history."

Beautiful Mind

Returning to the subject of his research, Lewis says he has been up to his neck in it. "My studio looks like the back room in *A Beautiful Mind*. Every square inch of flat surface is covered in articles and post-its and photos and maps of Moscow."

Anecdotally, he continued, "This girl came in here for the first time the other day and said, 'Let me guess... you're either a writer or a terrorist.'

"I had some adventures a few weeks ago in the Russian neighbourhoods in Brooklyn. I got a ride-along with the NYPD to photograph some shady stuff that will definitely be turning up in this series. I got to see a traditional 'thieves-world' – Russian underworld – tattoo parlour. All the tattoos you see on the criminals in **Winter Men** are the real deal," he concluded.

MISS ALL OF THESE?

That's okay, so did everybody else. They don't exist, except on the drawing board of top UK talent John Watson and on Dez Skinn's computer.

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Book Report

TITAN Books has acquired the UK rights to an updated and revised edition of ex-**Doctor Who** and **2000 AD** editor Alan McKenzie's **How to Draw & Sell Comic Strips**.

Originally published in 1987 by North Light Books, the 144-page softcover covers all aspects of the creative process as well as offering guidance on business aspects. The new version goes on sale on August 26, priced £12.99.

THE BRAVE and Bold Art of Jim Aparo is a 128-page TwoMorrows softcover that spotlights the work of the artist who – while best-known for the Batman team-up comic – also drew such DC heroes as Aquaman, the Spectre and the Phantom Stranger.

Profusely illustrated, the $15.95 volume chronicles Aparo's career from his time in advertising through his early comics work at Charlton and on to his lengthy stay at DC. The 8½x11" biography ships on October 19.

PANTHEON is issuing an expanded edition of **Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross**.

The new version of the 2003 hardcover, which runs to 320 pages, includes an additional 32 pages of new art. Available as a limited edition, it features a previously unpublished painting on the dust jacket as well as a multi-panelled, foldout binding. It ships in October, priced $75.

A basic softcover version of the 9x12" volume is also being offered. It is priced $24.95.

THE AUTHOR of **Funny Papers, Derby Dugan's Depression Funnies** and **Dugan Underground** – aka **The Derby Dugan Trilogy** – is to re-invent the Man of Steel's early years in a $24.95 Chronicle Books hardcover to be published in October.

Tom De Haven's 384-page **It's Superman!** is set in the 1930s and tells the story leading up to Superman's first appearance in **Action Comics** #1. The 6x9" novel could be viewed as a modern counterpart to George Lowther's 1942 book, **The Adventures of Superman** which was set in the same time period and also told the origin of Superman.

WATSON-Guptill's **MADvertising** is not a reissue of the 1979 paperback subtitled **Or Up MADison Avenue** but, rather, a totally new 8¼x10¼" softcover.

Compiled by David Shayne and subtitled **A MAD Look at 50 Years of MADison Avenue**, the $24.95 volume – a mix of black and white and colour – ships in October.

... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

From Seven to Zero

FORMER **Marvel Knights** writer Chuck Dixon is developing a six-parter that looks back to the beginning of WildStorm's Team 7.

Set during World War II, **Team Zero** spotlights the original agent code-named Deathblow, who's been put in charge of a six-man team on a mission into the heart of the Germany. The mini, which is scheduled for a December launch, is drawn by one-time **JLA** and **Superman** artist Doug Mahnke.

Zombie revives Crusade

BILLY Tucci is taking his Crusade Entertainment label out of mothballs to showcase his latest creation.

The writer/artist – who published his most recent **Shi** series, **Ju-Nen**, through Dark Horse – is to introduce Jim Okami in a black and white 48-pager shipping in September. The 19-year-old star of **Zombie-Sama** starts out as a sushi delivery boy but is soon forced to become an undead-battling warrior in order to rescue his ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend from the hordes of biologically-infected zombies that are threatening the world's entire population.

The $4.99 comic is described by Tucci as in the tradition of *Dawn of the Dead*, *The Seven Samurai* and *A Very Brady Sequel*.

Fallen Angel only stumbles

WITH barely a hiccup, writer Peter David's **Fallen Angel** has found a new home.

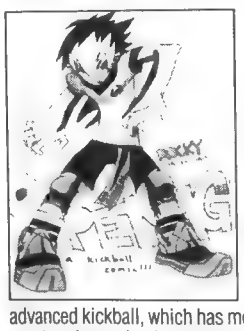
Cancelled by DC with #20, which shipped on May 4, the title was almost immediately picked up by IDW. It will be relaunched in December with J K Woodward replacing David Lopez and Fernando Blanco as series artist. A relative newcomer, Woodward's painted-style art was most recently seen on *Crazy Mary*, a story in **Digital Webbing Presents** #16.

Gatefold House of M

MARVEL is reprinting the first issue of **House of M**.

The rush-released second edition, which is currently available, adds value and collectability to an inexpensive reprint by using Olivier Coipel's original poster art for the series as a gatefold cover. The new printing will be priced $2.99, the same as the first edition.

Kickball... martial arts style



UDON Studios' Corey 'The Rey' Lewis is to follow up on **Strikeback**, his recent digest-sized Oni 136-pager, with a 64-page black and white one-shot.

Also from Oni, **Peng** features Rocky Hallelujah, whose older brother Ceasar is nicknamed Sharknife. It is set in the world of professional kickball. "Kickball, for those who don't know, is played like baseball, but instead of a bat, you kick a large, inflated rubber ball with your foot," Lewis explained. "In **Peng**, the game is advanced kickball, which has more of a martial arts style, combined with sports rules and points and innings."

Commenting on the story, the writer/artist stated, "The first half is kind of comedic/fun/statistical and the second half is the kickball finals and that's when stuff goes ballistic. It has its own feeling and flow that is very **Peng**. It takes some things that were stylistically established in **Sharknife** and brings them to a new level. Once again, it's light on story, heavy on motion and technique but it also delves a little deeper into character quirks."

The $5.95 **Peng** ships in September.

Rex Mundi redux

AFTER a seven month break following the departure of original artist Eric J, a new issue of **Rex Mundi** is finally on the Image schedule.

Shipping on September 7, the $2.99 #14 is the first issue by the series' new regular artist, newcomer Jim Di Bartolo.

Meanwhile, **Rex Mundi** writer Arvid Nelson is also working on a comicbook adaptation of Capcom's ***Killer 7***. Despite a publisher and an artist yet to be named for the project, the first issue is being lined up for a January release.

Chaykin goes West to Italy

HAVING written and drawn a Powwow Smith strip *[see art, left]* for his issue of DC's **Solo** anthology, Howard Chaykin is working on a Western graphic novel for Disney Italia.

Discussing his **Century**, the **American Flagg!** creator said, "If you accept the fact that Peckinpah's theme is ageing gunfighters who've outlived the West and find themselves at a loss in the new world, this is about a bunch of gunfighters who are really glad it's the 20th century.

"It takes place sometime between 1905 and 1914 – so it's before the first World War, but after the Wrights have flown Kitty Hawk," Chaykin continued. "It's set in Century, in West Texas. The streets are being paved; the nickelodeon is giving the local saloon a run for its money. The town is experiencing the onslaught of the 20th century: airplanes, cars, telephones, electric lights, movies, victrolas. It's all about that: the advent of the show business industry into this small town and what that means for the people in it."

Chaykin is quite confident there will be an English-language version of the as-yet unscheduled project. "I'm pretty sure we'll have an American distribution deal – my publisher is investing in an English language edition already and I have a feeling of where we're going to end up in regards to an American distributor, but I can't say for sure yet – but it will have an American deal."

WildCats make another comeback

THE SUBJECT of two relaunches in the past six years, WildStorm's flagship super-team is being given yet another chance with readers.

This time around **Wildcats** is returning as a nine-parter subtitled **Nemesis**. It centres on Zealot and the Coda and tells how one of their number has waged a millennia-long war of vengeance. With Nemesis's one-woman campaign moving towards her victory, it is up to the Wildcats to stop her. Written by **The Authority**'s Robbie Morrison and inked by Matt (**The Darkness**) Banning, it features present day sequences drawn by **Superman: Godfall**'s Talent Cadwell while Horacio (**Lazarus**

... people in the news... people in

DC HAS tempted Adam and Andy Kubert away from Marvel with three-year exclusives.

The brothers started their careers at DC. Andy moved to DC's main competitor 15 years ago with Adam following three years later. While they have each drawn **Ultimate X-Men**, Adam's recent credits include **Ultimate Fantastic Four** while his sibling illustrated **1602** and **Origin**.

BOTH editor Stephanie Moore and marketing's Darren Kane recently left Marvel. Replacements have yet to be named.

TOKYOPOP co-founder Mike Kiley has been named publisher as well as editor-in-chief of the Los Angeles-based company.

Kiley, who had already been promoted to editor-in-chief from his position as vice president of Internet technology, operations and human resources, is taking over the reins from Stuart J Levy, to whom he will continue to report.

Levy, the manga publisher's chief executive officer and chief operating officer, is to maintain involvement with product development.

BEAST Boy's Justiniano has signed exclusively with DC for two years.

up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news round

Jack) Domingues illustrates the flashback sequences that chronicle Nemesis's history down through the ages.

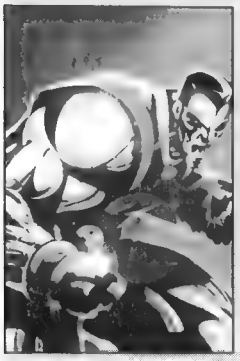
Wildcats: Nemesis #1 ships on September 14, priced $2.99.

Stoker Award for Image series

HEAVEN'S Devils has won this year's Bram Stoker Award for Illustrated Narrative.

Launched by Image in September 2003 and completed in July 2004, the black and white four-parter was created and written by Jai Nitz and drawn by Zach Howard.

Marvel spotlights resurrected mutant



RECENTLY returned from the dead in the pages of **Astonishing X-Men**, Peter Rasputin is now getting his own five-issue Marvel series.

Written by **District X**'s David Hine, the $2.99 **X-Men: Colossus – Bloodline** follows the Russian mutant as he returns to his homeland to face a shadowy villain from his past, one who is killing off his relatives. The miniseries is set to be illustrated by Jorge (**Mystique**) Lucas.

Shipping on September 7, the first issue features a cover *[art left]* drawn by Chris Bachalo.

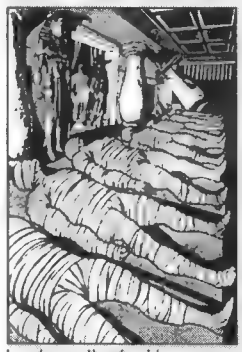
Discussing the series, the suddenly-popular Brit comics artist turned writer Hine said, "We will learn a lot more about Peter's parentage, exploring his history and unearthing some secrets – letting a few demons out of the closet. Most of Peter's close relatives have died over the years but we will be seeing some new family members including a cousin, Larisa, who works as an investigative journalist in Saint Petersburg. That can be a dangerous profession in Russia. Several journalist have been murdered in recent years when they got too close to uncovering corruption in high places. Also we meet Peter's mad old uncle Vlad. He's a hermit who digs Abba and lives in a shack in the wilds of Siberia. But he's not as harmless as he sounds; actually I never entirely trust anyone who digs Abba.'

Another slice of Black Forest from Image

WRITERS Todd Livingston and Robert Tinnell and artist Neil Vokes have a sequel in the pipeline to **The Black Forest**, their 2004 Image graphic novel.

In the 64-page Book 2: **The Castle of Shadows**, pilot Jack Shannon and mystic Archie Caldwell find themselves held prisoner by a crazed scientist who is creating super-soldiers out of apes and plans to use Shannon and Caldwell as subjects of an equally monstrous experiment. A black and white one-shot, it is set to ship from Image on September 7, priced $6.99.

Mummy walks at Moonstone



HAWKMAN co-writer Justin Gray is re-inventing an old horror move staple in Moonstone's **Vengeance of the Mummy**.

Drawn by newcomer Eliseu Gouvia-Zeu, the $2.95 black and white comic premieres in September. It sees the dead brought back to life by an unexpected side effect of bandages created by three scientists to graft directly to the skin of an injured person and heal them.

Unfortunately the scientists are also the three points of a love triangle that ends in murder. Wrapped in the bandages, the dead lover comes looking for vengeance.

Half Dead at Speakeasy

TOGETHER with her husband, one of the founders of the ***Sequential Tart*** website is writing a story of two conspiracies – one human, the other vampire – battling for control of London.

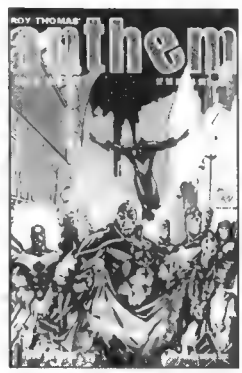
A Speakeasy five-parter, Barb Lien-Cooper and Park Cooper's **Half Dead** is being scheduled for release around New Year. It is drawn by Jimmy Bott, who previously illustrated **Government Bodies** for Across the Pond Comics. The major protagonists include Romany, a ballerina who comes back from certain death changed into a form to which a clean death might have been preferable.

Humanoids on hiatus

LEFT reeling by the sudden end to its association with DC, Humanoids has no plans for an immediate return to the US marketplace.

Francis Lombard, editor for the Hollywood-based offshoot from French graphic novel publisher Les Humanoides Associes, told **CI**, "Right now we're working with a bunch of American creators, regrouping from the end of the DC deal and publishing a lot of books in Europe." However for the benefit of English language readers he did add, "Towards the end of the year we'll have some big news."

Invaders writer goes back to war



ON JANUARY 16 Heroic Publishing is to launch an alternate reality World War II series written by Roy (**Invaders**) Thomas.

The former Marvel editor-in-chief's **Anthem** is set on a world where superheroes were created as part of a government programme to save America. In this reality Pearl Harbor was not just an attack by Japanese planes on a sleepy Hawaiian base. It was a full-blown assault on the US West Coast by Imperial Japanese forces spearheaded by a towering monster "that could mop up the ocean with Godzilla" and on the East Coast an assault by Nazi shock troops supported by flying saucers.

The $2.99 series is illustrated by Daniel Acuña, a DC cover artist, and relative newcomer Jorge Santamaria Garcia, who drew **Magneto: Dark Seduction** #4 for Marvel. Shown above is the first issue cover; art by Garcia.

Year-long comics promotion

REDEYE Magazine publisher Accent UK Press and Smallzone Distribution are spearheading an ambitious 12-month campaign to make the British public more aware of comics in general and British indie comics talent in particular.

The 365 Day Comic Nation is being launched over the Bank Holiday weekend of Friday August 26 to Monday August 29 with a series of nationwide events taking place in galleries, libraries, specialist shops and book stores. Full details are expected for inclusion next issue.

the news.... people in the news...

The artist is currently drawing **Day of Vengeance** and **The Human Race**.

INKER James A Hodgkins had his DC convention bag containing about £2,000 worth of artwork stolen after a signing at Memorabilia in Birmingham on Sunday, March 6.

The bag, which contained Staz Johnson pages from **Batman/Aliens** and a Dave Gibbons page from **JSA** #67 among other pieces, was taken after the public had been cleared from the hall and only dealers and guests remained.

Anyone believing they have been offered any of Hodgkins' missing art should contact the artist through the **CI** offices (details, page 3).

THE FORMER Your Man at Marvel has been bouncing around recently.

Bill Rosemann, who joined DC last year from CrossGen as Manager of Creative Services switched to become Manager of Marketing Communications. As such, he took over the position held for many years by Patty Jeres, who has been battling ill-health for some time.

However, within days of the new appointment being announced Rosemann was back in Creative Services. No reason was given, nor has there been any indication as to Jeres' future with DC.

round up... news round up... news round up... news round up... news

Manga bulletins

As traditionally published in Japan, all manga titles are in a 5¼x6" digest format, in black and white and read from right to left unless otherwise stated.

THE LATEST publisher to enter the manga arena is better known for its eclectic line of indie titles, which includes work by such alternative creators as Chester Brown, Julie Doucet, Dylan Horrocks, Jason Lutes, Joe Matt, Seth, Adrian Tomine and Chris Ware.

However, despite being Japanese comics, the 176-page **Push Man and Other Stories** is likely to be a good fit with Drawn & Quarterly's existing line. An anthology, it features pre-1969 work by Yoshihiro Tatsumi, who is often described as the Japanese alt grandfather. A collection of short stories, the $19.95 hardcover ships in September.

TOKYOPOP is to serialise a manga story in **CosmoGIRL**, which has six million readers.

The Adventures of CG is by Svetlana Chmakova, who has the 192-page first volume of romantic comedy manga coming from TokyoPop on October 11. The Canada-based Russian's $9.99 **Dramacon** is about a romance that blooms over the course of several years at an anime convention.

THIS autumn ADV's **Newtype** monthly is to begin serialising the **Neon Genesis Evangelion: Girlfriend of Steel** manga.

Based on the ***Girlfriend of Steel 2*** videogame, it is to be retitled *Evangelion: Angelic Days* in the magazine.

TOKYOPOP is to release the **Devil May Cry 3** manga on October 11.

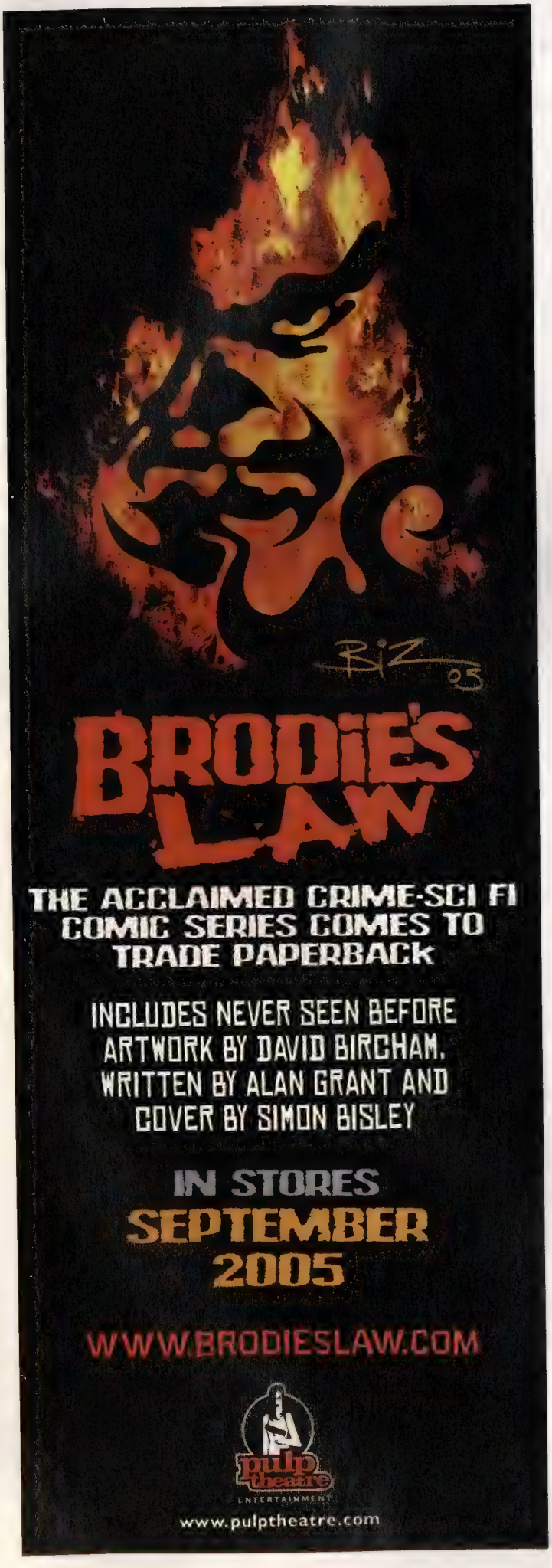
Based on the goth Capcom videogame series, the comic is written and drawn by **Kaoru-kun** and **Jirou**'s Suguro Chayamachi. A 168-pager, it is priced $9.99.

Rosen Publishing is planning a six-volume **Drawing Manga** series by Peter Gray.

To be released next year, the series will include **Animals**, **Female Action Figures**, **Heroes and Villains**, **Male Action Figures**, **Monsters** and **Robots**.

IN THE meantime, Watson-Guptill is expanding its line of how to draw manga titles by Christopher Hart with the 144-page **Manga Mania Chibi and Furry Characters**.

In colour and black and white, the 8½x11" softcover is priced $19.95/£12.95. To be published next January, it is subtitled **How to Draw the Adorable Mini-People and Cool Cat-Girls of Japanese Comics**.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Titan gains access

Adventures of fondly-remembered 1960s action heroes get hardcover library treatment from London-based publisher

AFTER more than two decades of being remembered only by a handful of fans of old British comics, IPC's action heroes are back in the spotlight again.

Ironically it is an American publisher that is resurrecting the likes of Robot Archie and Captain Hurricane for new adventures in **Albion**. Among others set to star in that Wild-Storm six-parter – which is being spear-headed by **Watch-men**'s Alan Moore – are the Spider and the Steel Claw, who are also the focus of a new hardcover line from Titan Books.

Licensed from IPC by the London-based publisher, the initial two £14.99 titles – one devoted to each hero – reprint their original black and white weekly strips in chronological sequence.

Subtitled **King of Crooks**, the 112-page **Spider** volume 1 went on sale on June 24. It contains stories written by Ted Cowan and Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel and drawn by Reg Bunn and begins with the pointy-eared antihero's first appearance, being reprinted from **Lion** dated June 26, 1965.

The first **Steel Claw** volume – sub-titled **The Vanishing Man** – is published on September 23. It features the invisible hero created by Sidney Bicknell in strips by the late science fiction author H Ken Bulmer and Tom Tully and artist Jesus Blasco. Another 112-pager, it kicks off with the introduction of the crook-turned-secret agent Louis Crandell from the very first issue of **Valiant**, dated October 6, 1962.

Above: The Spider by Reg Bunn.

Asked by **CI** why Titan had chosen to launch the line with the Spider and the Steel Claw, editor Nick Jones stated that, as the licencing deal had been negotiated by IPC's **Loaded** and **Uncut** publisher Andrew Sumner, who had also set up the **Albion** license, they were aware both heroes would feature in that WildStorm six-parter. "Also, these are the strongest, best-remembered characters. There's an awful lot of material as well for both Spider and the Steel Claw.

"But it's also quite an open-ended deal in that we can chop and change books if we wanted to depending on which titles do better," he explained. "It just seemed to us that the Spider and the Steel Claw were two of the most fondly remembered of the IPC heroes. There are so many of these

A CRACKLING WHIRLPOOL OF ULTRA-HIGH VOLTAGE SMASHED INTO CRANDELL'S STEEL HAND...
AAAGH!
GOOD GRANDELL... NOTHING YET... BUT THAT HAND!
BUT AS PROFESSOR BARRINGER STUMBLED FOR HELP...
THAT RAY! IT MADE ME INVISIBLE! BUT... BUT I'M MATERIALISING NOW!
FRANTICALLY HE REACHED OUT TO HAUL HIMSELF UP...
BY THUNDER! I TOUCHED A HIGH VOLTAGE CABLE! BUT... NO PAIN! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
WITHIN SECONDS...
I'M INVISIBLE AGAIN! IT HAPPENS WHEN I GET AN ELECTRIC SHOCK! INVISIBLE!
THE RAY... IT'S GIVEN ME THE CHANCE I'VE DREAMED OF... UNTOLD RICHES - WITHIN MY GRASP!
IT CAN'T BE!
IT'S A NIGHTMARE... IT MUST BE!
IN BANK
I'LL PUT MY STEEL HAND INTO MY POCKET... THE BANK ASSISTANTS WON'T SEE ANYTHING!
IN THE STRONG ROOM THE BANK MANAGER HAD JUST OPENED THE BURGLAR-PROOF SAFE...
HALF A MILLION IN POUNDS MORE THAN THIS BRANCH WAS EVER HELD BEFORE
SUDDENLY HE FELT A WEIGHT ON HIS SHOULDER...
WHO IS...?
NO! NO!

to IPC's archives

Above and bottom left: Pages from Titan's first ***Steel Claw*** *volume; art by Jesus Blasco.*

characters, which is why we've got a slightly more flexible deal than we would normally have on these kind of books; we can make the changes and choices as we go along. The option is there to do characters other than – or as well as – these two."

It is an accepted fact that most series improve after the first few stories. When asked why Titan has chosen to reprint chronologically rather than cherry picking the later, better-executed material for its first volumes, Jones responded, "We did consider going the other route. If you look at the **Transformers** books we did, we actually did them out of sequence . We did the Simon Furman stories first."

First story "quite strange"

"It's something we've done in the past and something we consider on every project," he added. "But I think the key with these ones is – as with **Dan Dare**, as with **Modesty Blaise** – that they're supposed to be library editions so really you want to collect it from the very beginning,you want to have it in sequence. You want to have it as complete as possible.

"And, anyway, the stories are quite strong on **Spider** and also **Steel Claw** – the first story is quite a strange one," Jones maintained. "But I think it's important to go from the beginning with these things. That way you can build up a library properly – you don't have to go back and fill in gaps."

Outside of **Transformers**, the only recent exception for Titan has been **James Bond**, where they were unable to start with the first of the newspaper series.

As for sourcing the artwork, Jones said, "We've just had to find the best quality copies of the comics that we can. IPC doesn't really have much in the way of archive material. They do have some artwork but not an awful lot and usually what they do have is the later stuff as well."

Accepting that the comics are not an ideal source, the editor continued, "But the quality of scanning these days is such that you can get at least as good as the comics were. You can get very, very good hi-res scans – we're scanning at something like 2000dpi, something ridiculous like that. They're really nice scans and the artwork will come across really nicely.

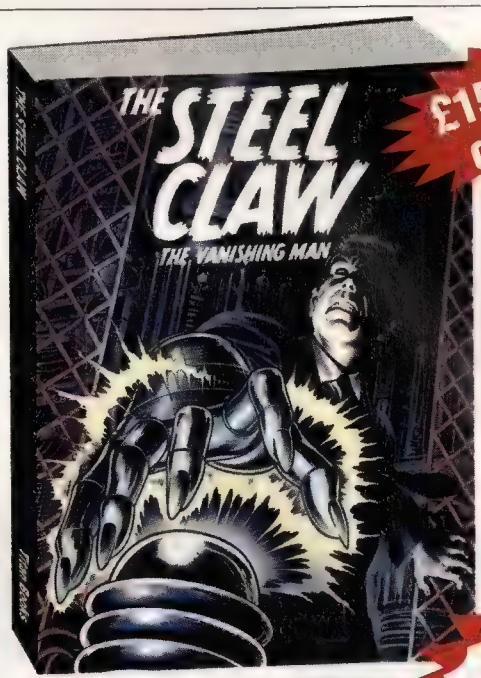
"It's just really unfortunate that the original film, all that stuff is long, long gone, "he added. "There's no way of trying to find it. Some of the artwork is out there but not all of it, particularly not the early stuff. That just doesn't exist any more."

According to Jones, who says Titan now has a wealth of experience with handling this sort of material, the quality threshold for these volumes is extremely high. Scans are meticulously checked and rechecked. "If something isn't good, we go back and do it again, and do it again, until we get it right."

As for the potential audience for these collections, Jones says there is not only the original fans but potential new readers for the 40-year-old material as well. "If you look at the comics, they're actually really great. The stories are just completely mental. And the artwork is lovely. It's true of any really good, strong comics. It'll stand the test of time."

- Both titles are being cross-promoted with **Albion**. They also include histories, creator profiles and other such features.

Above: The Steel Claw by Jesus Blasco.



£150 worth of prizes!

Titan Books, the UK's leading graphic novels publisher, is adding a second classic British comics character to its line of *Collector's Edition Classic Library series* as **The Steel Claw** joins **The Spider** this September.

Priced £14.99, this 112pg hardback features the first two Steel Claw serials from 1962, behind a new cover by Brian Bolland.

ISBN: 1845761561

10 copies to be won!

When an experiment goes awry, laboratory assistant Louis Crandell discovers that when his replacement right hand, a steel claw, connects with electricity, he turns invisible! But to what ends will he put this power?

Never-before-collected and featuring exclusive new articles exploring the history of the Steel Claw, this collection is the perfect introduction. For the first time ever, the rarely seen adventures of this classic British character are collected together! Long out of print, these stories have not been available since the 1960s and will be a must for comics fans, historians and dads alike!

To enter,simply choose the correct answer to the following question:

What comic launched the Steel Claw series in 1962?

a) Victor
b) Vulcan
c) Valiant

Name: _____
(Please print)

Address: _____
(Street & number)

_____
(Town or city)

_____
(County, Province or State, post code or zip code and country if outside UK)

The winners will be selected and announced in Comics International #189

Please also complete the following:

My five favourite features this issue (please mark in order of preference, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th; no ticks) were:

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
___ NEWS ROUNDUP
___ SEZ DEZ
___ STEEL CLAW FEATURE
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ PREVIEW (JUSTICE)
___ REVIEWS
___ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS
___ ADVANCE LISTINGS
___ IN THE GUTTER
___ NETWORKS
___ Q&A
___ COMMENT
___ JACK STAFF
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PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped reading, the one you wish we'd replace with a new contender for the top spot:

_____

Send this form (sorry, no faxes, copies or e-mails) to:

STEEL CLAW COMPETITION
COMICS INTERNATIONAL,
345 DITCHLING ROAD, BRIGHTON BN1 6JJ

All entries must be postmarked before August 31st, 2005

Panel Beaters: Justice

Comics International's close-up on the original artwork of some of the industry's greatest talents

In order to show the sheer beauty of original art, its detail often lost through colouring and commercial printing processes, *Panel Beaters* presents a look at individual frames taken direct from originals and printed much larger. Collectors who would like to share their treasures with our readers should write to us at **Panel Beaters, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ, East Sussex, England.**

Dougie Braithwaite talks about pencilling ***Justice****:*

"Drawing some of – if not all – DC's iconic heroes and villains in one major 'earth shattering' story line would be a dream come true for most professional comicbook artists and was one major factor in my decision to take on **Justice**. But from an artistic point of view, and most importantly, the opportunity of working and collaborating with Alex [Ross] was too enticing an opportunity to turn down. Down the years I've often felt my work has been compromised by bad or average inking and sometimes not being on the same wavelength with collaborators who were not willing to put the same effort into a page as I did, with notable exceptions of the likes of Robin Riggs, the exceptional Bill Reinhold and the great Al Williamson.

I think the original plan for the series was to have Alex do the covers, promo art and concept designs, Jim [Krueger] the writing and have me pencil the series and somebody of my choice inking me; the same set up as in the **Universe X** and **Paradise X** series. Out of the blue one evening Alex rang up, said he'd always wanted the opportunity to paint over my pencils and, basically, this was as good a time as any to give it a shot. What did I think? Could it work? Well, there was only one way to find out...

Once the script for an issue has been has written I either get a draft copy emailed directly to me from Jim or Joey [Cavalieri, editor] sends it once it's been edited. But working with Alex has been a totally new experience.

Firstly I have to work on a Bristol board that Alex provides me with; regular company art boards just aren't absorbant enough for him to get the right paint finishes. Also, the board is on a much larger scale than I've been used to, larger than A3, it's like a throwback to the early days of comic art, before the comic companies bought in the standard size for art boards in the early '70s. Then having to find a pencil lead that worked well on the paper without smudging took a bit of sourcing. But it's all good now...

I feel in this collaboration we're bringing out the best in each other, we're pushing each other to new levels. We both respect each other's work immensely, and we both knew that there would have to be some small compromises with working with each other on this project so individual egos have to be put to one side and we just let each other get on with our respective jobs and do the best comic work that we can. You have to believe in each other as a team."

Above: a detail close-up of Dougie Braithwaite pencil art for the opening splash spread (below) of Justice #1. Worked up from writer Jim Kreuger's script, this was sent from Britain to America to Alex Ross to render as fully painted artwork. Launching on August 17 with a 40-page first issue, ***Justice*** *is a $2.99 bimonthly 12-issue series.*

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Zoom gives Marvel and Fox jitters over third X-movie

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Examining the latest developments between films and comics

NO STRANGER to litigation, Marvel is at it again.

This time the House of Ideas has got into bed with 20th Century Fox – by whose TV arm it was sued over *Mutant X* – to file suit against Sony, which it had already taken to court over merchandising rights to the first Spider-Man film.

The new dispute arises over *Zoom*, the movie based on Jason Lethcoe's **Zoom's Academy for the Super Gifted**, which is published by Astonish Comics. The film, which stars Tim (*Galaxy Quest*) Allen, *Memoirs of an Invisible Man*'s Chevy Chase and Courteney (*Friends*) Cox, has yet to go into production even though it's lined up for a May 12, 2006 US opening.

But it's almost certainly that date that brought the matter to a head... the third X-Men movie is set to premiere just two weeks later and – in a move that has been categorised as guerilla marketing – Sony jumped *Zoom* back from its original August launch to May 12 *after* the *X3* date was announced.

> ***"There's a main theme to the book and it's that 'Heroes are Made, Not Born'."***
> ***...Jason Lethcoe, writer/artist Zoom's Academy***

With that in mind, it is, I suppose, hardly surprising Marvel and Fox have hit back by suggesting the Sony flick is confusingly similar to their X-Men franchise. They cite such common elements as "teenage mutant superheroes, an underground training facility and a sinister government program."

As it happens, the complaint does not suggest Lethcoe's comic plagiarises the X-Men backdrop. Instead, it blames scriptwriter David (*Elf*) Bernbaum plus Allen, Adam (*Small Soldiers*) Rifkin and others responsible for the movie's screenplay – – for changes made to the source material.

Magical School

Accepting that *Zoom* does contain the elements cited by Marvel/Fox, there have certainly been some major alterations from the way Lethcoe describes his comic. "It's the story of a 13-year-old girl who has to overcome a difficult and painful past to realise her heroic potential. Her past includes her parent's recent divorce, the loss of her best friend and all around unpopularity at school. When she finds out that her father's secret occupation is a teacher at a school for students with 'superpowers she takes an entrance exam. She is amazed when the ring, which tests her abilities, begins to glow... ensuring that she does indeed have powers of some kind.

"Her excited father takes her to Zoom's Academy... a magical school on an island accessible by boat. That is where the story really begins..." stated the writer/artist, who works as an illustrator storyboarding features for Disney.

Magical school, huh? Anybody else thinking **Harry Potter**?

At least the school is an integral part of the story of J K Rowling's young mage where, with Marvel's mutants, Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters never really rose above the level of the X-Men's base of operations. The school aspect was rarely to the forefront and the premises could just as easily have been a mountain cave, an artificial satellite or a mansion in Central Park.

Getting back to Lethcoe's description of **Zoom's Academy for the Super Gifted**, which has also been the subject of a two-book deal with Ballantine, the writer/artist said two separate ideas inspired the concept. "On the one hand, I had a tough time in school growing up and had always thought 'Wouldn't it be great if there were a better place to go to school?' And when I was little I had always had that fascination with 'What if I really had super powers and didn't know it?' I used to stare at a spoon for hours, hoping I might move it. And after a few hours my eyes would go cross-eyed and it looked like it had maybe moved an inch on the table. So that was one side of it."

Heroes are made

"And I wanted to do a book that dealt with some real issues – issues that kids today are dealing with," he added. "Having gone through a divorce myself, I really wanted to address that from a kid's point of view: with two parents that love her, but trying to discover her own worth. And I like the idea of a child, who has so many things against her, rising up against that and discovering her own worth. So there is a lot of that I really kind of have had my own experience – my own daughter – in mind. And wanting to do something that she and other kids could relate to – all kids go through difficult things – something that has substance. And hope. There's a main theme to the book and it's that 'Heroes are Made, Not Born' and that's what the Academy is all about. And that's what, I hope, is taken away from the book to the outside world."

"I think that what a kid needs most of all, during a divorce and even after, is a reassurance to the part of her that asks 'Is it because of me?' And they need to get a sense of 'Who am I?' and 'How do I discover this within a context that's more difficult?'. I mean, I don't want the book to get too heavy, but I don't want to shy away from that – even if it's lightly woven under the surface – something that those kids, and even adults, can identify with," Lethcoe concluded.

Hardly seems like the stuff of "teenage mutant superheroes, an underground training facility and a sinister government program," does it? In fact, it sounds a darn sight more interesting than much standard superhero fare.

Oh, and one other thing... if *Zoom* is such a threat to the X-Men franchise, why was *Hero High* allowed to proceed without challenge?

The simple answer is probably that TV isn't the movies. Also, no one protected their franchises quite as vigorously back in 1981 when Filmation began running the 26 animated episodes set in a school founded to train future generations of superheroes as a segment in NBC's *Kid Superpower Hour*... and, let's face it, schools for gifted youngsters are something of a cliche – comicbook and otherwise.

But, if *Hero High* can be dismissed so easily, what about *Sky High* starring Bruce (*Evil Dead*) Campbell, *Wonder Woman*'s Lynda Carter and *Escape from LA*'s Kurt Russell?

The Disney movie, which opens in the US on July 29, is set on a world where superheroes are commonplace. It centres on an elite high school that is entrusted with the responsibility of moulding today's power-gifted students into tomorrow's superheroes. One must assume the academic locale is irrelevant to Marvel and Fox.

So we come back to Sony's perceived attempt to either sabotage *X3* or profit off the back of it... the change of dates in other words. Given that, as **Variety** suggests, "Fox and Marvel would likely be satisfied with a new release date and moderate script changes", we're talking about a battle for pole position at the box office more than we're discussing properties with confusing similarities.

Hooray for Hollywood.

Watchmen axed

First optioned by *V for Vendetta* producer Joel (*The Matrix*) Silver – who brought *Brazil* director Terry Gilliam on board – shortly after Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons completed their magnum opus in 1987, **Watchmen** has had a troubled history on its journey to the big screen.

But all finally seemed to be coming together under *The Bourne Supremacy* director Paul Greengrass and scriptwriter David (*X-Men*) Hayter. A pre-production office had been set up at Pinewood Studios and the project was moving forward.

Then Paramount, supposedly nervous about the film's $100 million budget, pulled the plug. Producers Larry Gordon and Lloyd Levin are currently shopping the movie around other studios...

And finally...

A bit disappointed to hear Alan Cummings won't be reprising his Nighcrawler role in *X3*. His accent might have grated a bit but his portrayal was up there with Hugh Jackman's Wolverine.

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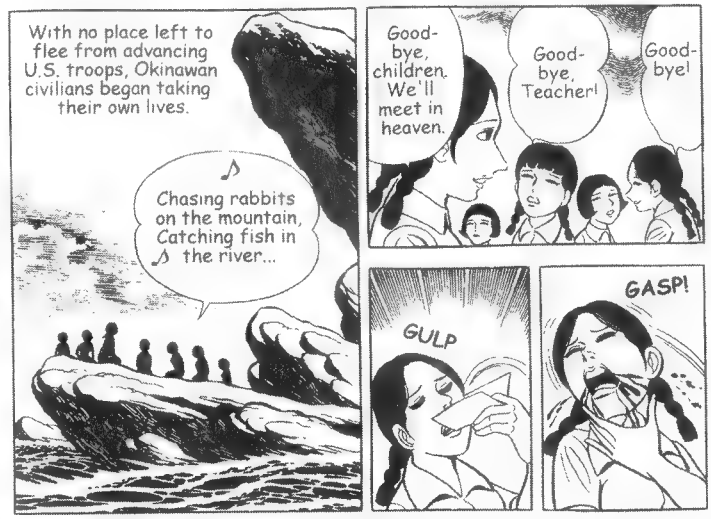
Keiji Nakazawa: Barefoot in Hiroshima

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels


With no place left to flee from advancing U.S. troops, Okinawan civilians began taking their own lives.
♪ Chasing rabbits on the mountain, Catching fish in the river... ♪
Good-bye, children. We'll meet in heaven.
Good-bye, Teacher!
Good-bye!
GULP
GASP!

Above and below: Two harrowing scenes from the first volume of ***Barefoot Gen****. In August, Optimum Prime <www.optimumreleasing.com> is releasing* The Animated Barefoot Gen DVD.

IT WAS a Monday morning, 60 years ago this August. On August 6, 1945, the sun was shining. It seemed like just another ordinary summer day as six-year-old Keiji Nakazawa made his way to school. Looking up, he was surprised to see an American B-29 bomber flying overhead. No air-raid warning sirens had sounded. 43 seconds later, a bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" exploded 1,800 feet above him. In an instant, Keiji and thousands of other residents of Hiroshima were hit by an atomic bomb.

Mercifully no nation apart from Japan has had to endure atomic bombings and their insidious radioactive after-effects. This may explain why their shockwaves continue to reverberate in numerous manga and anime fantasies set in post-apocalyptic dystopias, from **Akira** and **Nausicaa** to **Dragon Head** and many more. Perhaps creating stories about this massive, unique trauma to a nation's psyche offers one way to deal with these painful memories and their legacy.

> ***"They [the Japanese] hadn't accepted their responsibility for the war."*** *...Keiji Nakazawa*

In Keiji Nakazawa's case, only one mile from ground zero, he miraculously escaped with only minor injuries along with his pregnant mother. In the ensuing nightmare, his father, brother and sister were not so lucky, trapped under their burning house. Keiji was forced to grow up overnight and help his mother and new baby sister survive the horrors and hardships of a devastated, defeated Japan.

As a boy, it was a relief for him to escape into the first successful manga by Osamu Tezuka, the father of the post-war comics industry. Inspired by Tezuka's 1948 **Shin-Takarajima** or New Treasure Island, as well as by his late father's artistry, Keiji soon showed real talent for drawing at school.

While working in his first job as a sign painter after graduating, Keiji started to sell cartoons and comics to manga magazines. In time, his commissions built up so that he was able to move to Tokyo in 1961, where he specialised in adventure and sports stories for boys. Back then, nobody in Japan spoke about being an A-bomb survivor, so Keiji learned to keep quiet about it in public. He never included anything about his childhood experiences in his escapist manga.

That all changed after his mother died in 1966. When he went to the crematorium to collect her ashes, he found there were no bones left, as there normally are after a cremation. Radioactive caesium from the bomb had eaten them away. In a 2003 interview with Alan Gleason in **The Comics Journal** No. 256, Nakazawa remembered, "I was enraged that the bomb had taken even my mother's bones. All the way on the train back to Tokyo, I couldn't stop thinking about it. I realised I'd never thought seriously about the bomb, the war and why it happened. The more I thought about it, the more obvious it was the Japanese had not confronted these issues at all. They hadn't accepted their own responsibility for the war. I decided from then on, I'd write about the bomb and the war, and pin the blame where it belonged."

To vent his anger, Keiji began to talk about these issues through his manga. Initially, the larger publishers rejected his proposals for dark, controversial post-war dramas, so he drew them for the new, smaller circulation adult magazines like **Manga Punch**. But then Tadasu Ogano, an editor at Shueisha, publisher of the massively popular boys' weekly **Shonen Jump**, invited him to draw a short autobiographical story. Out of this came Nagano's offer to run an ongoing longer serial about his childhood in Jump.

Keiji created the character Gen Nakoaka as his largely identical alter ego and through him accurately recounts his experiences in **Hadashi no Gen** or Barefoot Gen. It became a huge hit when it was serialised from 1972. It's amazing to think that such a sensitive topic could be published in a comic for boys. Considering his outspoken criticism of Japan's militarist regime and wartime propaganda, Keiji felt sure he would be the target of hate mail or threats, but he recalls, "**Gen** only got praise. Even the right-wingers cried when they read it!" **Barefoot Gen** went on to appear in other magazines accumulating ten volumes of over 200 pages each, and has been adapted into anime and live action movies, a musical and an opera.

Its powerful anti-nuclear and anti-war message, which were more overtly critical of the Japanese than of the Americans, led to it becoming the first book-length manga to be translated into English in 1978 by the small Tokyo-based non-profit volunteer group Project Gen. Two years earlier, several Japanese peace activists had joined a Transcontinental Walk for Peace from coast to coast across America. En route, they showed American marchers a copy of the Japanese book of **Barefoot Gen**, who urged them to put it into English. Back in Japan, they set to work and eventually translated the first four volumes.

Every few years, **Barefoot Gen** finds fresh audiences. After the success of **Maus**, Penguin reissued the first two volumes and now, amid the tide of manga sweeping the globe, Nakazawa's masterpiece is back again in a brand new edition, re-lettered and newly translated. San Francisco's Last Gasp <www.lastgasp.com> plans to eventually release the whole 10-volume series.

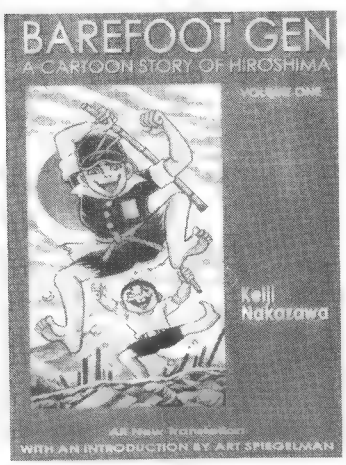
It is intriguing to speculate whether such a critical, heavily politicised series as **Barefoot Gen** could see print today in Japan's multi-million-selling magazines. The climate is different and right-wingers have recently succeeded in pressuring Shueisha, the same publisher that launched **Gen**, to censor and suspend a manga story about Japan's military records.

You may have heard about the recent anti-Japanese protests in China, sparked in part by the Japanese government's approval of some new school history textbooks by right-wing authors, who omitted any reckoning of the numbers of Chinese sexually abused and killed by the Japanese army in the notorious 1937 Rape of Nanking. They also completely removed any mention of the many Asian "comfort women" used as sex slaves for Japanese troops.

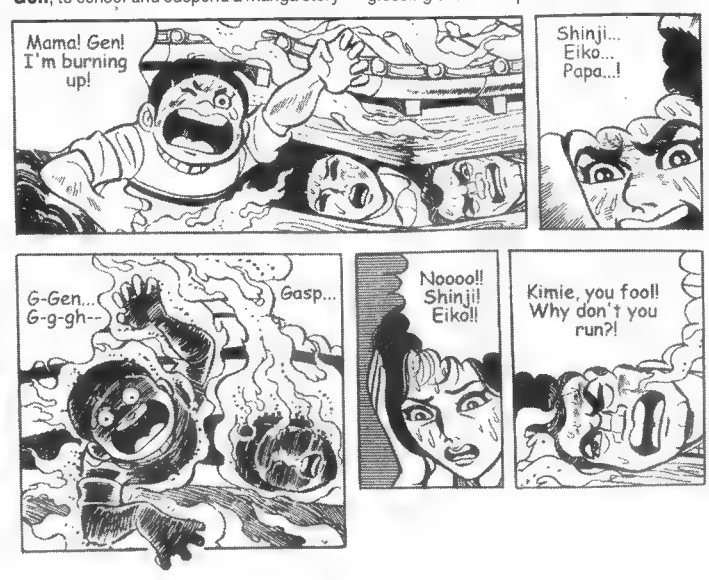
In October 2004, publishers Shueisha received many complaints about a historical serial in **Young Jump** called Kuni ga Moeru (The Country is Burning) by Hiroshi Motomiya, after he showed scenes of the Nanking massacre. Among the objectors was a group of 37 politicians who claimed that the depiction of the killings grossly distorted history. Specific objections concerned the authenticity of certain photos, on which Motomiya had based some of his panels. In a climbdown, Shueisha dropped the serial and amended the offending images when it was reprinted in book form.

Keiji Nakazawa is adamant: "[Japan] experienced complete devastation in the last war, and yet ultra-nationalists are crawling out of the woodwork again, glorifying the war and trying to rewrite the history textbooks. And as usual they talk about restoring the emperor to his rightful position of absolute authority. ... That's why I say we need to dismantle the whole imperial system."

In this climate of nationalism and denial, the repeated apologies by Japan's Prime Minister for his country's war atrocities may not be enough to counter the official glossing over of the past.



Above: The Turnaround-distributed new first edition from Last Gasp; author Keiji Nakazawa.



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This column has been rated 18+

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

I don't know about you, but I have an instinctive aversion to being told what to do. Worse still is being told what I can't do. Didn't care for it much at school, and now I'm over 18, I sure as fuck won't put up with it. If it doesn't hurt someone else, if it's not infringing on anyone else's rights or inconveniencing them unduly – basically, if I'm not treading on someone else's toes without them having ploughed over mine – I'll do what I bloody well please.

I will read whatever I want, I will watch whatever I want, and now that I own my own comic shop, I'll stock whatever comics I see fit to promote to the public. Even if they contain references to sex, real-world violence or (gasp) swear words. If something exists in this world, it's worth writing and reading about. It's worth commenting upon and thinking about.

So I'll stock those comics, because this is an adult entertainment medium just like any other. Comics are no more exclusively for children than novels, films, games or television are for children.

Most of our customers are intelligent, adult human beings. They deserve to be treated as such, so I'm going to cater for them with the widest selection of challenging comic-book fiction I can find. Sure, I'll refuse to sell certain material to kids until I've shown it to their parents. We're responsible. But I will not be censored because children might actually enter our shop. Are libraries censored because children might enter them? No. And for now, in the UK, neither are comic shops.

> He honestly believed that Free Comic Book Day should only be for children.

It's different in the States, "Land of the Free". In a country where they actually have a constitution, a law which specifically protects the freedom of expression, that freedom is under constant attack from the very legal institutions which are sworn to protect it. And the biggest target, because we're the smallest of industries, is comics.

Time and again comic store owners are prosecuted either because they've been stung – deliberately targeted by the police, politicians in search of appearing "morally righteous", Mothers of America and other interfering busybodies who've sent in borderline minors to try to purchase border-line adult material – or because they've merely *stocked* material (no matter how securely bagged, or racked however highly) intended for the majority of us, for adults.

Can you imagine a bookstore being prosecuted for stocking D.H. Lawrence? I mean, these days, now that we've all grown up a little and are ashamed that one of Britain's finest authors was ever the source of such contention. No? Well please spare a prayer for those having to deal with such nightmare scenarios right now.

The situation is so bad that there exists in America the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, a charity devoted to the defence of comic stores facing ruin, and comic store owners facing *jail sentences* for having the temerity to treat their overwhelmingly adult customers as aesthetically inquisitive individuals. It's no wonder that creators like Neil Gaiman and Dave Sim spend so much time and money of their own trying to promote the CBLDF and raise funds for their intervention. (Well, it *is* a wonder, so bless them to bits for caring.)

And it's not as if there are laws straight across the board. Over there, they have "community standards", a vague yardstick by which retailers are supposed to judge what is locally acceptable and act accordingly.

Let me give you an example. Last year, as part of the Free Comic Book Day, one retailer bought in some copies of **Alternative Comics** #2, an excellent example of the quality this medium can produce. By mistake, it fell into the hands of "a minor" (sorry, I don't know how old). Now the man is being charged with seven criminal counts for allegedly violating two laws. Forget what they might be – do you know what the scene they're objecting to is? A scene depicting Pablo Picasso painting in the nude. Now, I saw my father naked from as early as I can remember. Didn't traumatise *me*. It's just. The human. Body. The context wasn't remotely sexual.

Then, to add insult to injury, in a discussion on the subject one comicbook reader proffered the opinion that the store had no right buying in the comic in the first place. He honestly believed that Free Comic Book Day should only be for children.

Of course children need to be protected from harm, but if we wrap them all in too much cotton wool, then how will they deal with the real world when they encounter it for themselves? I swear to God, any day now a school is going to be sued because little Jimmy got a paper cut. Furthermore, what about our own rights as adults?

Unfortunately this state of affairs answers a question one of our customers asked recently. Jhelisa, a dauntingly intelligent and discerning young lady with a broad interest in comics supported by her father (also a customer), asked why Tokyopop's manga with non-explicit boy-on-boy romance bore a higher advisory label than its straight counterpart that actually showed boobies. Understandably, she considered it a cop-out on the publisher's part. But as Mark explained, Tokyopop was brave enough to even *publish* stuff like **Gravitation** in the USA. They're merely covering their own asses (sorry!) *and* their retailers' asses when it came to prosecution under America's frighteningly retarded legal vagaries.

"It can't happen here"? I hope so. In the meantime, huge respect to all my peers in (not so)United States of America.

You can find out more about the CBLDF at <www.cbldf.org>. An equally enlightening column on censorship at comicbook conventions ("Your kids are MINE") can be found at <www.silverbulletcomicbooks.com/engine>.

Stephen Holland runs Page 45, a comic shop in Nottingham UK with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin. Proceeds from this column went to the CBLDF.

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Compiled by Jim Hannah

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Seven Soldiers: Guardian 4 (Grant Morrison & Cameron Stewart) Is a broken, embittered Jake Jordan ready for *Sex Secrets of the Newsboy Army*? Who were Captain 7, Kid Scarface, Baby Brains, Ali-Ka-Zoom, Chop Suzi, Li'l Hollywood and Millions the Mystery Mutt? $2.99

new **Sgt. Rock's Combat Tales** Vol 1 (Robert Kanigher & various) Reprinting Sgt. Rock's Prize Battle Tales, plus stories from the pages of G.I. Combat and Our Army At War! 128pg $9.99

new **Shazam/Superman: First Thunder** 1 (of 4; Judd Winick & Josh Middleton) While Superman must stop members of a cult from stealing an ancient artifact from the Metropolis Natural History Museum, Captain Marvel must defeat giant robots rampaging through Fawcett City. 40pg $3.50

Son of Vulcan 4 (of 6; Scott Beatty & Keron Grant) Mikey Devante inherited the superpowers of Vulcan – but he can't control them! With Vulcan's secret HQ and everything in it obliterated, what is Mikey's final inheritance? Vulcan's rogues gallery! $2.99

Superman 221 (Mark Verheiden & Ed Benes) Omac is running loose. Villains are united. Magic is everywhere. Naturally, it's a perfect time for Bizarro to show up! $2.50

Swamp Thing 19 (Joshua Dysart & Ronald Wimberly) Led by a bizarre mentor, Alec begins to understand what happened when he shed his godlike elemental powers. This knowledge could turn the Swamp Thing's remarkable life in a strange new direction. Mature readers. $2.99

Villains United 5 (of 6; Gail Simone & Dale Eaglesham + Wade von Grawbadger) Here it is – the battle you would never have imagined: Catman vs Deadshot! The group sworn to undermine the villainous Society finds itself at odds with one another as they try to determine the answer to a single mystery: Who is Mockingbird? $2.50

Y: The Last Man 37 *(Paper Dolls* 1 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + José Marzan Jr) As he searches Sydney for his long-lost girlfriend, Yorick encounters a dangerous new adversary who threatens to jeopardise more than just this reunion. Mature readers. $2.99

Marvel

Amazing Fantasy 12 (Fred Van Lente + Jeff Parker & Leonard Kirk + Federica Manfredi) A.I.M.'s sleeper agents launch their terrifying attack and Carmilla confronts her diabolical mother at last! $2.99

Cable/Deadpool 19 (Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) A heartwarming romp filled with tragedy, despair and self-delusion – and, when it's done, our bosom buddies won't look at each other the same way again. $2.99

Exiles 69 *(World Tour: Earth 616* #1 of 3; Tony Bedard & Paul Pelletier) The Exiles return to prime earth, only to find it not so prime anymore. So not only do the Exiles have House of M to deal with, they have to face the most powerful mutant on the planet! $2.99

Fantastic Four: House of M 3 (of 3; John Layman & Scot Eaton) The treacherous Victor Von Doom's fantastic, fearsome foursome have at last manoeuvred Magneto into the one place he is vulnerable, and it is time for Doom to strike. $2.99

new **Ghost Rider** 1 (of 6; Garth Ennis & Clayton Crain) He's paying the price for his deal with the Devil – is the Ghost Rider condemned to ride the highways of Hell for all eternity? Mature readers. $2.99

Incredible Hulk 86 (Peter David & Jorge Lucas) As the final confrontation of Hulk and A.I.M. comes to its conclusion, what role will Scorpion play in tipping the scales for the winning ruler of Australia? $2.99

Iron Man: House of M 3 (of 3; Greg Pak & Pat Lee) All the agents the House of M can muster are out searching for the rebellious Iron Man, unaware that Tony Stark is fighting to prevent a catastrophe that could leave countless mutants dead! $2.99

Marvel Adventures Spider-Man 7 (Sean Mckeever & Patrick Scherberger) When the Vulture steals a sacred African mask, Spider-Man isn't the only one hot on his trail. $2.50

Marvel Team-Up 12 (Robert Kirkman & Paco Medina) Learn everything there is to know about Titannus, from his tortuous birth to the events that led him to seek refuge on Earth. $2.99

Ororo: Before the Storm 4 (of 4; Marc Sumerak & Carlo Barberi) Double-crossed and trapped deep within an ancient Egyptian temple, Ororo must fight her way to freedom in time to stop sinister plans from being set in motion. .. $2.99

Punisher 25 *(The Slavers* 1 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leandro Fernandez; *Max Comics)* On a pitch-black Brooklyn night, in a dead-end alley, Frank Castle brutally dispatches a crew of Albanian thugs that is menacing a young woman. Her name is Viorica, she's from Moldavia, and when she tells Frank her story, that's when the real killing starts. Mature readers. $2.99

Spider-Girl 90 (Tom Defalco & Ron Frenz) A hideous spider-creature, a giant turtle, Millie the Model and a road-runner! Is Spider-Girl really experiencing all of these bizarre transformations or has she finally lost her ever-loving mind? $2.99

Spider-Girl Vol 4: Turning Point Digest (Tom Defalco & Pat Olliffe) The adventures of Spider-Man's daughter continue as Mayday once again faces Kaine, Spider-Man swings again, and Darkdevil is... actually nice. Collects Spider-Girl #17-21 and ½. 152pg $7.99

Spider-Man Unlimited 11 (Brian Reed + Jason Miller & Michael Golden + Alberto Dose) Two more looks into the world of the wall-crawler. First, at an underworld bar, patrons place bets on the outcome of a battle between Spidey and the Hulk. Then, a field trip by Peter Parker's class takes a turn for the dangerous when it ends up at ground zero in a battle between the Thing and the Absorbing Man. $2.99

new **Supreme Power: Nighthawk** 1 (of 5; Daniel Way & Steve Dillon; *MAX Comics)* The people of Chicago are dying in the streets. victims of a monster whose thirst for slaughter cannot be quenched, whose soul is a bottomless void, and whose scars run even deeper than Nighthawk's. Mature readers. .. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 82 *(Gang War* 4 of 7; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The gang war consuming New York gets worse with Wilson Fisk in retreat and an emboldened Hammerhead making the big play for his criminal turf. $2.50

Uncanny X-Men 464 (Chris Claremont & Chris Bachalo) Psylocke and Marvel Girl race against time to stop the entire universe from being completely obliterated. $2.50

new **X-Men: Colossus – Bloodline** 1 (of 5; David Hine & Jorge Lucas) Colossus has returned from the dead, only to find his relatives are being killed in his homeland! $2.99

ON SALE FROM
SEPT 14

Dark Horse

one-shot **Blade of the Immortal** 105 *(Duet;* Hiroaki Samura) The feud between the Ittō-ryū and the Mugai-ryū heats up as Anotsu renews his quest for revenge. Mature readers. b&w, $2.99

one-shot **Devil Chef: The Man with the Soft-Serve Brain** (Jack Pollock) Documents Chef's titanic struggle with his chief rival, Softy (aka Citizen Cone) of Softy Soft-Serve Ice Cream. 96pg $6.95

one-shot **Jingle Belle** (Paul Dini & Jose Garibaldi + Stephanie Gladden + J. Bone; tpb) Tired of remaining an unsung – so to speak – icon of the holiday season in spite of her best efforts, Jingle defies her father's 'no publicity' edict and creates an animated TV special with her elfin friends. Collects the four-issue miniseries. 96pg $12.95

one-shot **New Recruits** (various; tpb) Five of the coolest, strangest, and funniest stories from a group of undiscovered and underrated newcomers. 128pg . $12.95

one-shot **Zombieworld: Winter's Dregs and Other Stories** (various; tpb) The

end of the world is near. The dead walk the earth and feed on the flesh of the living. The birth of a terrifying new world is at hand. Collecting the Zombie World: Winter's Dregs four-issue miniseries, Eat Your Heart Out one-shot, Home For the Holidays one-shot, and the Tree of Death four-issue miniseries. 240pg $24.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets 64 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* Jack heads to Atlantic City, slowly picking up the pieces of his shattered life working as an underground bare-knuckle boxer. But wherever he goes, trouble's sure to follow, and when Graves pays him a visit, the ex-junkie soon realises he's in for the fight of his life. Mature $2.75

Action Comics 831 (Gail Simone & John Byrne + Nelson) Get ready for Superman versus Black Adam – and Doctor Psycho will be there to pick up the pieces. $2.50

All Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder 2 (Frank Miller & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) After witnessing his parents' brutal deaths, Dick Grayson's life is seemingly destroyed. But Batman whisks the young lad into his care and promises him something Bruce never had: retribution. $2.99

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 195 *(Snow* 4 of 5; J.H. Williams III + Dan Curtis Johnson & Seth Fisher) Batman's operatives encounter Mr Freeze and come to grips with the madman's plan to bring his wife back against all odds. $2.50

The Batman Strikes! 13 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) Batman is on the hunt for Catwoman after a string of burglaries, but Catwoman's claiming she's innocent! $2.25

Breach 9 (Bob Harras & Javier Pulido + Alvaro Lopez) Troops and scientists from Otherside find evidence that no one who has had contact with the Rifters can be trusted, not even Breach! $2.50

Desolation Jones 3 (Warren Ellis & J.H. Williams III) Desolation Jones continues his pursuit of what may be the foulest artifact ever created by man! As he makes his way through the filthy denizens of LA's seediest district, he becomes acquainted with a woman who can shed some light on his task – but there are some willing to do anything to see that he fails! Mature readers.$2.99

Fables 41 *(Homelands* 5 of 5; Bill Willingham & Mark Buckingham + Steve Leialoha) Boy Blue continues his enforced history lesson at the hands of The Adversary, his captor, and is finally reunited with his lost love. But is Happily Ever After even possible after so many centuries apart? Mature readers.$2.75

Firestorm 17 (Stuart Moore & Jamal Igle + Rob Stull) Trapped in a remote power installation by the Society, Firestorm – and a mysterious girl called Gehenna – must defeat Black Adam's army of supervillains to escape! $2.50

Green Arrow 54 *(Heading into the Light* 1 of 4; Judd Winick & Tom Fowler + Rodney Ramos) Green Arrow faces off against an old villain who's suddenly become much more deadly. His name is Doctor Light, and he wants revenge on the heroes who violated his mind! $2.50

Hawkman 44 (Justin Gray + Jimmy Palmiotti & Joe Bennett + Ruy Jose) There's a new Hawkman in town, as Golden Eagle assumes the mantle of the Hawk! But has he already gone too far? $2.50

one-shot **Hellblazer: Black Flowers** (Mike Carey & Jock + Lee Bermejo + Marcelo Frusin; tpb) This volume ratchets up the suspense as Constantine begins to see – and battle – the signs of a coming apocalypse in the stories *The Game of Cat and Mouse, Black Flowers* and *Third Worlds* from issues #181-186. Mature readers. 144pg $14.99

JLA 118 *(Crisis of Conscience* 4 of 5; Geoff Johns + Allan Heinberg & Chris Batista + Mark Farmer) The battle between Martian Manhunter and Despero continues, as the fight that began on the JLA Watchtower ends on Earth! .. $2.50

one-shot **Kamandi Archives** Vol 1 (Jack Kirby & Kirby + Mike Royer; hbk) In these tales from Kamandi #1-10 (1972-1973), Kamandi – one of the few survivors of the Great Disaster – must make his way in a world populated by bizarre mutated animals and other strange wonders! 244pg $49.99

Lucifer 66 (Mike Carey & Michael Kaluta) As all Creation crumbles, and demonic armies clash on the fields of Heaven, an earthly sorcerer weaves a potent summoning spell – which is answered by the imp Gaudium. Mature $2.75

Majestic 9 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Georges Jeanty + Trevor Scott) Majestic sets out to discover the secrets of the hidden Kherubim technology lacing the planet's crust But someone isn't happy about that, and Majestic is targeted for execution. $2.99

Mnemovore 6 (of 6; Hans Rodionoff + Ray Fawkes & Mike Huddleston) Time and memory strobe into a blur as Kaley clashes with both Mike Neville and the mnemovore in the series conclusion. Mature readers. $2.99

Monster Collection: The Girl Who Can Deal with Magical Monsters Vol 3 (Itoh Sei) Kasche and her small fellowship have faced all manner of summoned beasts in their quest for the Guardian of Knowledge, but they could be at quest's end. Mature readers. 162pg b&w $9.99

Nightwing 112 (Devin Grayson & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Dick Grayson's gone undercover. Maybe too far undercover! When the criminals whose trust he's earned stab him in the back, the parts of his life that have been under wraps come to the surface. $2.50

Rann-Thanagar War 5 (of 6; Dave Gibbons & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) The course of the war takes a surprise turn as traitors and unexpected allies reveal themselves. $2.50

one-shot **Robin/Batgirl: Fresh Blood** (Bill Willingham + Andersen Gabrych & various; tpb) Collects Robin #132-133 and Batgirl #58-59. After relocating to Blüdhaven, two of Gotham's youngest heroes face Nightwing's enemy Shrike and old foe, the Penguin. 96pg . $12.99

Scooby-Doo 100 (Terrence Griep, Jr & Joe Staton + Horacio Ottolini) Zoinks! It's the 100th issue! Check out how the gang manages to solve the mystery afoot that will help them win the Trial of the Century! $2.25

one-shot **Showcase Presents: Green Lantern** Vol 1 (various; tpb) Collects the Silver Age classics Showcase #22-24 and Green Lantern #1-17, featuring Hal Jordan's earliest adventures as Earth's Green Lantern! 528pg b&w $16.99

one-shot **Showcase Presents Superman** Vol 1 (various) Collects Superman #122-133 and Action Comics #241-257, featuring the birth of the Silver Age Superman mythos, including the first appearances of Supergirl, Brainiac, the Fortess of Solitude and more! 560pg b&w $16.99

Supergirl 2 (Jeph Loeb & Ian Churchill + Norm Rapmund) The battle that had to happen is here: Supergirl vs Superboy! After last issue's titanic tussle with Power Girl, why is Kara going toe-to-toe with the Boy of Steel? $2.99

new **Wildcats: Nemesis** 1 (of 9; Robbie Morrison & various) Framed for the betrayal and slaughter of the Kheran military forces on Earth at the dawn of mankind, rogue warrior Charis Adrastea embarks on an epic quest to avenge the massacre, uncovering a conspiracy that threatens the entire universe. $2.99

Marvel

Daredevil vs Punisher 4 (of 6; David Lapham) Hammerhead has placed a $10m bounty on the Punisher's head, and it's created a minor war zone in Daredevil's backyard. Mature readers. $2.99

one-shot **Essential Ghost Rider** Vol 1 (various; tpb) When orphaned stunt-show star Johnny Blaze discovers his adoptive father Crash Simpson is dying of a rare blood disease, he barters his immortal soul for a miracle cure. Collecting Marvel Spotlight #5-12, Ghost Rider #1-20 and Daredevil #138. 560pg $16.99

one-shot **The Fantastic Four Presents Franklin Richards: Son of a Genius** (Marc Sumerak + Chris Eliopoulos & Chris Eliopoulos) Franklin Richards finally hits the big time, collecting all four Franklin Richards: Son of a Genius stories from the pages of Power Pack! . $2.99

Gravity 4 (of 5; Sean McKeever & Mike Norton) After everything that's happened, Greg decides to stop being Gravity. But just when he thinks he's out of the superhero business for good, he gets sucked back in. $2.99

Marvel Knights 4 22 (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Valentine De Landro) On Yancy Street, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, someone – or something – is putting the hurt on the neighbourhood's tough guys. $2.99

Marvel Knights Spider-Man 18 (Reginald Hudlin & Billy Tan) The good news: Ethan Edwards finally knows who he really is and where he's from. The bad news: he can't handle the truth. Is Ethan doomed to carry out the bloody legacy of his people? $2.99

one-shot **Marvel Masterworks: Golden Age Human Torch** Vol 1 (various; hb) Reprinting the first four issues of Human Torch, #2-5a, from 1940-41. See the Torch and Toro fight side-by-side with the Sub-Mariner, as he once again crashes into New York City! 280pg $49.99

Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects 5 (of 6; Greg Pak & Renato Arlem) Now able to track the mysterious source that controls Dr Van Roekel's augmented army, Storm, Iron Man, the Human Torch and the Thing track Elektra to the jungles of the Amazon where they discover more than they bargained for. $2.99

Mega Morphs 3 (of 4; Sean McKeever & Lou Kang) What do you get when you cross five of the world's greatest superheroes – all piloting state-of-the-art combat mecha – with a 200-foot tall robot designed to kill Godzilla? .. $2.99

Mutopia X 3 (of 5; David Hine & Lan Medina) Ismael Ortega's young daughter is about to go through the most important day of her life – the Rite of Mutant Transcendancy. $2.99

New Thunderbolts 12 (Fabian Nicieza & Tom Grummett) One third of the team is hospitalised – one third of the team is AWOL and one third of the team has to fight the maniacal manipulations of Killgrave the Purple Man – if they can avoid fighting each other first! ... $2.99

New Warriors 4 (of 6; Zeb Wells & Young) Debrii joins the cast, except somebody forgot to tell the New Warriors! Can our heroes save a small town from a

Illuminations

Highlights from August's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

Generally I am not a lover of miniseries, so few have any real relevance to me, preferring as I do to become involved with characters and situations on an on-going basis. Dark Horse has an exception to my rule, **B.P.R.D The Black Flame**. Although a six-issue mini, this is part of a larger on-going story; the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Development. Each new miniseries explores the Bureau and the weird and wonderful with Mike Mignola scripts which so far have delivered every time. If you haven't tried this series before I highly recommend it, and if your local store doesn't stock it then make them.

Sales 3/5 (let's get this up to 5) Quality 5/5

As far as new series, even those hated miniseries, DC is cooking with gas at the moment. I literally have customers queuing up for all the new DC releases, plus talking animatedly about them. When a company gets it that right then it needs to be told. Well done, DC. This month sees the release of **Supergirl** #0 and #1 written by Jeph Loeb with art by Ian Churchill. Kara Zor-el was introduced in **Superman/Batman** #8-13, also written by Jeph, and the launch of the series sees her square off against Power Girl. Couple this with two covers – from Michael Turner and Ian Churchill – and DC has another smash hit. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Vying to beat the sales on **Supergirl** will be **Justice** #1 (of 12). Yes, most miniseries we can live without, but this is an Alex Ross-led re-imagining of the Justice League of America. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

I'm staying with DC for just a while longer because the ever-prolific Warren Ellis has another new ongoing series, **Jack Cross**. Drawn by that Scottish stalwart Gary Erskine, this tale of a one-man solution to direct threats to America's freedoms is the sort of story that Warren excels at. Jack works for hire, but not for money, and once on the case he will stop at nothing to get it done. This I feel sure will appeal more to the British market than the US, and will for us be a strong seller. **Sales 4/5 Quality 5/5**

Image central as always has a lot of new miniseries and one-shots, all of which should sell better, but for some reason do not strike a cord with the British buying public, except from Top Cow. The **Necromancer** #1 looks like having everything that the public wants: female teenager, a talent for sorcery, the excellent art of Francis Manapul, mages and Dark Age demons and a good script by Joshua Ortega. Retailers should not overlook this one, I think I smell a sleeper hit here.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

About three years ago Marvel's Joe Quesada decided to stop annuals as they were often of low quality and it would be better to have 14 issues a year instead, in some cases more. This has proved to be a great decision, with all the titles with the extra issues selling well without any drop in any particular title. My question to Joe now is why four **Ultimate Annuals**? The stories sound good and the **Ultimate Spider-Man** and **Ultimate Fantastic Four** annuals are set to have ramifications in the ongoing regular Ultimate titles. But all annuals sell less than the regular series, so once again, Joe, why? Is it to hide the less than auspicious toy tie launch, **Mega Morphs** #1 (of 4)? The rest of Marvel output of any note is House of M or House Of M related so nothing else to shout about, except: Why the annuals? **Sales 2/5 Quality 5/5**

With 24 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

mysterious behemoth and play nice with their prickly new teammate? $2.99

The Pulse 11 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Gaydos) The birth of Jessica Jones and Luke Cage's baby. Plus: Luke Cage needs a new costume, bad! $2.99

one-shot **Punisher Max** Vol 1 (Garth Ennis & Lewis Larosa + Leandro Fernandez; *MAX Comics;* hb) In *In The Beginning,* Frank Castle's old associate Microchip is back, and he's after the Punisher. But first, he's got an offer for Frank that he'd better not refuse. Collects Punisher #1-12. Mature readers. 304pg $29.99

new **Thor: Blood Oath** 1 (of 6; Mike Avon Oeming & Scott Kolins) The Warriors Three are put on trial for murder. Standing beside his brothers-in-arms, Thor ties himself to their fate, as they are sent on an impossible journey by the Giants to pay a blood price for the killing of a Giant's son. $2.99

Toxin 6 (of 6; Peter Milligan & Darick Robertson) Ex-cop Pat Mulligan's sick of playing nice. While he's been struggling to control the alien symbiote Toxin, Razor-Fist ups the ante again, bringing terror to New York City. $2.99

Ultimates 2 8 (Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch) Tony and Natasha are on the eve of their wedding... but when Nick Fury makes his move against the mysterious traitor that's been plaguing them, the team will never be the same! Mature readers. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 6 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; hb) Collects Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 11: Carnage and Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 12: Superstars, plus a hefty helping of DVD-style extras! 288pg $29.99

Ultimate X-Men 63 (Brian Vaughan & Stuart Immonen) It's mutant against mutant as Cyclops and his X-Men risk their lives to take down the young man known as Havok, who has unwittingly become a pawn in Magneto's deadly game. $2.50

Weapon X: Days of Future Now 3 (of 5; Frank Tieri & Andy Smith) Agent Zero finally learns the awful truth of what happened to the Neverland death camps! $2.99

X-Men 175 *(Wild Kingdom* 1 of 4; Peter Milligan & Salvador Larroca) The X-Men travel to the heart of Africa to investigate reports of strange, mutated animals roaming wild near Wakanda. $2 50

Young Avengers 8 (Allan Heinberg & Andrea DiVito) The secrets are out when Captain America and Jessica Jones confront the Young Avengers' parents about their children's double lives. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

SEPT 21

Dark Horse

Aeon Flux 2 of (4; Mike Kennedy & Timothy Green II) Although she keeps her secret agent activity hidden from her sister, Una Flux, Aeon is not above using her sister's love-struck infatuation with a government scientist to her advantage. $2.99

Conan 20 (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Dave Stewart) A bar fight in the City of Thieves yields far more than expected when Conan learns of the fabled and impregnable Tower of the Elephant. Determined to rob it, Conan sets out on a quest that will involve new comrades, sudden death, horrifying creatures, and gruesome unsettling fates for both gods and men $2.99

Concrete Vol 2 *(Heights;* Paul Chadwick; tpb) Big as a boulder and strong as an ox, he's Concrete, seven-feet of stony celebrity. That he's a government-created cyborg is the cover story, but in truth he's the mind of one Ronald Lithgow trapped inside a rocky shell of alien origin. Collects Concrete issues #6-10; Concrete Colour Special, the short stories: *World Beneath the Skin* and *Brighter.* 208pg b&w $12.95

The Goon 14 (Eric Powell) It's well known that a nameless man known to some as the Zombie Priest came to the Goon's burg to build a gang from the dead. But why? Who is he? Where did he come from? $2.99

Hellsing Vol 7 (Kohta Hirano; tpb) What do you get when you mix reanimated Nazis, vampires, and freaky killer Catholics and Protestants breathing down each others' necks? In the case of Hellsing, you get an all-out bloody war. 192pg b&w $13.95

new **Star Wars: X-Wing-Rogue Leader** 1 (of 3; Haden Blackman & Tomás Giorello + Michael Atiyeh) In the wake of the death of the Emperor and the destruction of the Death Star II, a group of Rebel pilots are looking forward to some well-deserved R&R. Instead, they run into a deadly attack by vengeful Imperials that changes the course of all of their lives. ... $2.99

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 644 (Greg Rucka & Karl Kerschl) After the shocking revelations of Identity Crisis and JLA: Crisis of Conscience, Superman confronts Zatanna! $2.50

Batgirl 68 (Andersen Gabrych & Alé Garza + Jesse Delperdang) Batgirl infiltrates the Balkan stronghold of Nyssa, daughter of the deceased Ra's al Ghul, on a quest to learn the identity of her mother. $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 69 (A.J. Lieberman & Al Barrionuevo + Bit) Hush will stop at nothing to learn the secrets of a brand new Clayface! But what's the connection between Clayface and the murder investigation surrounding Alfred? $2.50

Batman: Jekyll and Hyde 6 (of 6; Paul Jenkins & Sean Phillips) Two-Face has infected the citizens of Gotham with his Jekyll and Hyde serum and is on the run from the Batman! $2.99

Batman: War Games Act 3 (various; tpb) Collects Batman #633, Batgirl #57, Catwoman #36, Robin #131, and Batman: Gotham Knights #58. 208pg $14.99

Birds of Prey 86 (Gail Simone & various) The Birds return to Metropolis – and one will stay for good! Three guest artists including Bruce Timm – illustrate one unforgettable moving day! $2.50

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 14 *(Losing My Religion* 2 of 3; Si Spencer) Divine chaos ignites in Tim's alternate London just as the Hunter and Yo-Yo, his strange familiar, arrive in the city. Tim faces a spirited street girl named Jackie – winner takes the universe. Mature readers. $2.75

one-shot **Chikyu Misaki** Vol 1 (Iwahara Yuji) Schoolgirl Makishima Misaki has inherited the house that belonged to her maternal grandfather, in a small, quiet, snowy town that boasts its own local legend, the Hohopo. 196pg b&w $9.99

Day of Vengeance 6 (Bill Willingham & Justiniano + Walden Wong) Can the combined forces of the Shadowpact finally stop the Spectre? $2.50

The Devil Does Exist Vol 3 (Takanashi Mitsuba) Kayano attempts to make sense of her feelings but is always left confused. Just when she thinks she has seen the good side of Takeru, he does something completely infuriating. 192pg b&w $9.99

Ex Machina 15 *(Off the Grid* 1 of 2; Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister) When a long-lost relative makes a desperate cry for help, Mayor Mitchell Hundred is forced to leave New York City for the first time since his election. Mature readers. $2.99

new **Green Lantern Corps: Recharge** 1 (of 5; Geoff Johns + Dave Gibbons & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) For too long, the light of the Green Lantern Corps has been absent from the cosmos. Now it is time for the Guardians of the Universe to revive the Corps' proud heritage, to recruit new servants to their cause and to recharge the mighty power that once they wielded. 40pg $3.50

Hellblazer 212 *(Down in the Ground Where the Dead Men Go* 6 of 6; Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco) Once again, Constantine finds himself making deals in hell. But when one of his trademark schemes backfires with the First of the Fallen, John may inadvertently doom the soul of one of his closest and dearest friends. Mature readers. $2.75

The Human Race 7 (of 7; Ben Raab & Justiniano + Walden Wong) The unique odyssey of the young man named Ulysses draws to a close. But first Ulysses must make a fateful decision: can he abandon the town of Shuster's Glen, and the parents who believe he's dead? $2.99

JSA Classified 3 (Geoff Johns & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti) The origin of Power Girl continues as she travels to Gotham to meet the Huntress and finds herself face-to-face with the Crime Syndicate! $2.50

Looney Tunes 130 (Sholly Fisch & Omar Aranda + Alberto Saichann) Pete Puma plays professor, but Bugs teaches him a real lesson! Plus, tales of Sylvester and Foghorn Leghorn – and just what did Ralph Phillips do during his summer vacation anyway? $2.25

The Losers 28 (Andy Diggle & Colin Wilson) It's Roque vs the Losers, and the stakes are the fate of Max's nuclear arsenal, an entire nation under his control and the life of Pooch, who stands on the brink of execution. Mature readers. $2.99

Manhunter 14 (Marc Andreyko & Javier Pina + Fernando Blanco) The secret of Project Manhunter is revealed – and so is the identity of Kate Spencer's long-lost father! $2.50

Neil Gaiman's Neverwhere 4 (of 9; Mike Carey & Glenn Fabry) Door visits the spectacular Floating Market to shop for a bodyguard as she searches for the murderer of her family. What she purchases may be nothing but danger and duplicity, as the macabre assassins Croup and Vandemar prepare to spring their latest trap. Mature readers. $2.99

Otherworld 7 (of 7; Phil Jimenez & Jimenez + Andy Lanning) Act 1 comes to its shattering conclusion! Jason confronts the Director in his inner sanctum and positions himself to take over the technological realm. And what really happened when Siobhan was tutored in the Hall of Ashoaa? Mature. $2.99

one-shot **Pieces of a Spiral** Vol 1 (Tachibana Kaimu) Sakuya and Wakyo are reincarnated and reunited only to discover that Bishu-sama – their master and mentor from a past existence – is in their midst and in grave danger from vengeful demons! 200pg b&w ... $9.99

Plastic Man 18 (Kyle Baker) The showdown between Plas and his adopted stepdaughter's fiancé boyfriend friend with no benefits! Beware the wrath and rage of El Rey! $2.99

The Powerpuff Girls 66 (various) Will the Powerpuff Girls be beat by their own dancing feet? Plus, Princess takes her homework assignment a little too far! $2.25

Robin 142 (Bill Willingham & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) As Tim prepares to make the biggest decision of his life – whether or not to leave Batman's employ for a Black Ops job in the U.S. government – an old flame comes back into his life. $2.50

new **Seven Soldiers: Mister Miracle** 1 (of 4; Grant Morrison & Pasqual Ferry) After a hallucinatory encounter with the being called Metron, the formerly aimless and dissatisfied Mister Miracle finds himself with a new mission in life. $2.99

one-shot **Sleeper Book Four: The Long Way Home** (Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips) Collecting the final chapter of the Sleeper saga, Vol 2 #7-12. The endgame is in play and the fates of Carver, Lynch and the mysterious Tao are all up for grabs. Mature readers. 144pg .. $14.99

Sword of the Dark Ones Vol 3 (Kotobuki Tsukasa & Yasui Kentaro) After 5,000 years of conflict, the Dark Ones will stop at nothing to annihilate humanity, even if it means becoming the very creatures they despise. Mature readers. 204pg b&w $9.99

Teen Titans 28 (Gail Simone & Rob Liefeld) Kestrel, the mad dog of the Chaos Realm, paralyses the Titans in a bid to gain power like he's never had before! $2.50

Top 10: Beyond the Farthest Precinct 2 (of 8; Paul DiFilippo & Jerry Ordway; *America's Best Comics)* The cops of Precinct 10 are ill at ease. Not only is Traynor – aka Jetlad – deposed as head of the department, but his replacement is not to everyone's taste. $2.99

The Winter Men 2 (of 8; Brett Lewis & John Paul Leon) Kris is now in the US trying to infiltrate the Red Mafia in an effort to solve his case. But is the mafia a step ahead of him already? And what could Nikki be doing in New York? Mature readers. $2.99

new **Wraithborn** 1 (of 6; Joe Benitez + Marcia Chen & Benitez + Joe Weems) Long ago, powerful Immortals ruled the world, wreaking unbridled havoc and destruction, until their ultimate defeat by the Wraithborn. Now the Wraithborn power is unexpectedly passed on to a timid high school girl, who must discover the secrets of her new abilities before she falls prey to the Immortals! Variant cover. $2.99

Wonder Woman Vol 3 *(Beauty and the Beasts;* various; tpb) Reprints Wonder Woman #15-19 and Action Comics #600! Wonder Woman faces her toughest opponents yet in tales featuring Silver Swan, Superman, Circe, Darkseid and more! 160pg $19.99

Marvel

Black Panther 8 *(Wild Kingdom* 2 of 4; Reginald Hudlin & David Yardin) Investigating a sudden outburst of strange, mutated wild animals in Africa, the X-Men come face-to-face with something worse. $2.99

Daredevil: Father 3 (of 5; Joe Quesada & Danny Miki + Richard Isanove) Daredevil has his work cut out for him: New York's crippling heat wave shows no signs of relief, a serial killer has a stranglehold on the city, and there's a new superhero team on the streets that's got a big gripe with him. $2.99

Exiles 70 *(World Tour: Earth 616* #2 of 3; Tony Bedard & Paul Pelletier) The Exiles return to prime earth, only to find it not so prime anymore. So not only do the Exiles have House of M to deal with, they also have to face the most powerful mutant on the planet! $2.99

Exiles Vol 11: Time Breakers (Tony Bedard & Mizuki Sakakibara + James Calafiore; tpb) Why is the Timebroker so evil all of a sudden? Who are the Timebreakers? Who's been pulling the strings all along? And when the heck is Beak going to make himself useful? Collects Exiles #62-68. 168pg .. $17.99

one-shot **Gambit: Hath No Fury** (John Layman & Georges Jeanty + Roger Robinson; tpb) It's voodoo chaos in the Big Easy as the reanimated dead are crawling out of their graves. Collects Gambit #7-12. 144pg $14.99

Hulk Visionaries: Peter David Vol 2 (Peter David & various; tpb) The grey Hulk's out to get the Leader and neither Man-Bull, Halflife, nor the Hulkbusters can stop him! Collects Incredible Hulk #340-348. ..... $19.99

Machine Teen 5 (of 5; Marc Sumerak & Mike Hawthorne) The past catches up with Adam and his father as they come face-to-face with the forces that they've been running from for years. $2.99

Marvel 1602: New World 3 (of 6; Greg Pak & Greg Tocchini) A new law is passed in the New World outlawing superpowered Witchbreed. Can Peter Parquagh keep his new powers a secret in a place that needs a Spider-Man so badly? $3.50

Marvel Adventures Fantastic Four 4 (Jeff Parker & Carlo Pagulayan) The Fantastic Four don't feel so fantastic when their powers start failing – right when a Sentinel has decided to target them! $2.50

one-shot **Marvel Masterworks: Captain Marvel** Vol 1 (various; hb) The space-born superhero is coming at you with scintillating science fiction in the Mighty Marvel Manner! Collecting Marvel Super-Heroes #12, #13 and Captain Marvel (Vol 1) #1-9. 240pg $49.99

one-shot **Marvel Milestones: Ghost Rider, Black Widow & Iceman** (various) Three titanic tales featuring the fantastic founders of the sensational Seventies super-group the Champions! 48pg $3.99

Mary Jane Vol 2: Homecoming Digest (Sean Mckeever & Takeshi Miyazawa) After some bumps in the road, it seems MJ is finally over Spider-Man and excited to go to Homecoming with her boyfriend, Harry Osborn. But unless Harry's dad sees an improvement in his son's slipping grades, Harry can forget about ever seeing Mary Jane again. Collects Mary Jane: Homecoming #1-4. 96pg . $6.99

one-shot **Rogue: Forget-Me-Not** (Tony Bedard & Karl Moline + Derec Donovan; tpb) Rogue may be a hero now, but she wasn't always so 'sweet – and that criminal past may just come back to haunt her! A traumatic encounter will leave her drastically changed... permanently! Collects Rogue #7-12. 144pg $14.99

Runaways 8 (Brian K. Vaughan & Takeshi Miyazawa) A sinister plan set into motion years ago by the Runaways' evil parents finally comes to a head. To protect not just Earth but the entire Marvel Universe, one young member of the team must make the ultimate sacrifice. $2.99

Spider-Man: House of M 4 (of 5; Mark Waid + Tom Peyer & Salvador Larroca) Thanks to Jonah Jameson, anti-human sentiment hits an all-time high, endangering Peter Parker and his loved ones. $2.99

new **Supreme Power: Hyperion** 1 (of 5; J. Michael Straczynski & Dan Jurgens; *MAX Comics)* Now that the world knows his dark secret, Hyperion suddenly finds himself both alone and hunted. Four new superpowered individuals – each based on a character from the original Squadron Supreme – are after his hide,

and they've got the will and means to take him down. Mature readers. $2.99

Ultimate Fantastic Four 23 (Mark Millar & Greg Land) On a world they never thought they'd visit, the fledgling FF find themselves hunted by the strangest enemies imaginable. . $2.50

Ultimate Iron Man 4 (of 5; Orson Scott Card & Andy Kubert) Tony Stark and Jim Rhodey Rhodes have their first adventure. What happens here will change their lives! Mature. $2.99

Wolverine 32 (Mark Millar & Kaare Andrews) A ghost story in the tradition of Creepy and Eerie, this standalone issue set in a World War II concentration camp stars a feral character who looks like Wolverine, acts like Wolverine – but who is he really? Mature. $2.50

X-Men: Kitty Pryde – Shadow & Flame 4 (of 5; Akira Yoshida & Paul Smith) Kitty is pulled deeper into the mystery surrounding the death of her former master Ogun and the Path of Destiny cult that now worships his name. $2.99

ON SALE FROM
SEPT 28

Dark Horse

B.P.R.D.: The Black Flame 2 (of 6; Mike Mignola + John Arcudi & Guy Davis + Dave Stewart) Abe Sapien tries to settle into a desk job as the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense's war against the frog monsters rages. $2.99

one-shot **B.P.R.D.: The Dead** (Mike Mignola + John Arcudi & Guy Davis + Dave Stewart; tpb) The Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense and their new team leader, a former corpse himself, moves into its new headquarters. 152pg $17.95

one-shot **Conan: The God in the Bowl and Other Stories** (Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord + Thomas Yeates + Dave Stewart) Introducing Conan's most famed adversary, Thoth-amon, and a new female foil to Conan's exploits – Janissa, the Widowmaker, bound by a pact to a witch who has sinister plans for Conan. 124pg $15.95

Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom Vol 3 (Paul S. Newman & Frank Bolle + others) Doctor Solar struggles to save humanity from giant death machines, nuclear annihilation, lava monsters and robot scorpions! Reprints #15-22 of Gold Key's original series. 200pg $49.95

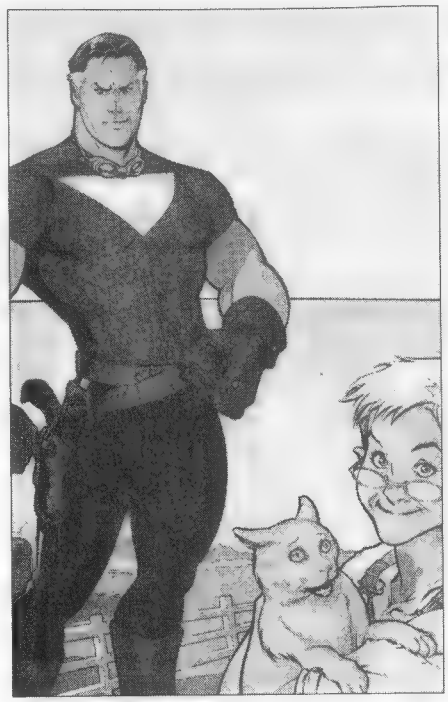
Revelations 2 (of 6; Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos) Detective Charlie Northern delves deeper into the secret workings of the Vatican as he tries to unravel the strange death of a highly influential cardinal. $2.99

Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures Vol 4 (various; tpb) As the Wars burn across the galaxy and the true intentions of the Sith are revealed, the heroes of the conflict emerge. 96pg $6.95

Star Wars: Republic 81 *(The Hidden Enemy* 1 of 3; John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons + Brad Anderson) The Separatist attack on the Wookiee homeworld of Kashyyyyk demands a strong response from the Republic. $2.99

Super Manga Blast! 56 (various) Makoto Kobayashi presents his first extended *What's Michael?* storyline in a demented, Planet of the Apes-style send-up that pits three astronauts against a world of fickle, feline captors. Mature readers. b&w, 128pg $5.99

Usagi Yojimbo 87 (Stan Sakai) The slaves labouring in Lord Sanada's illegal mine – including rabit ronin Usagi Yojimbo and Geishu bodyguard Tomoe Ame – finally hit pay dirt. But they're at the mercy of the vicious blood princess Noriko, who has something horrible in store for all of the slaves. $2.99



close-up

ABC: A-Z – Tom Strong & Jack B. Quick

America's Best Comics

Writer: Peter Hogan

Artists: Chris Sprouse + Kevin Nowlan

This is the first in a series of one-shots aimed to gather together informative material guaranteed to satisfy ABC fans everywhere! This initial volume reveals all the secrets and will answer any questions about Tom Strong and Jack B. Quick, along with their supporting casts and gadgets! $3.99

ON SALE SEPT 28

DC Comics

one-shot **ABC: A-Z – Tom Strong & Jack B. Quick** (Peter Hogan & Kevin Nowlan + Chris Sprouse; America's Best Comics) *See Close-Up, above.*

Astro City: The Dark Age 4 (of 16; Kurt Busiek & Brent Anderson) Madame Majestrix holds all of North America hostage, and the only man who can save it from complete destruction is the Silver Agent. But he's in jail... or is he? $2.99

The Authority: The Magnificent Kev 2 (of 5; Garth Ennis & Carlos Ezquerra) Kev's mission to retrieve the Midnighter is under way! On the way, we learn more about the troubled SAS corporal's life. Mature readers.. $2.99

Batman 645 (Judd Winick & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The startling revelation of the Red Hood's identity leads Batman on a quest for answers. Could it really be Jason Todd cutting a swath through the Gotham City underworld? $2.50

one-shot **Batman Illustrated by Neal Adams** Vol 3 (various & Neal Adams + Dick Giordano; tpb) Includes material from Batman #232, #234, #237, #243-245 and #251, featuring Two-Face, the Joker, and more members of the Rogues Gallery. 280pg $49.99

Batman: Journey into Knight 2 (Andrew Helfer & Tan Eng Huat) The Carrier comes to Gotham City – and he has brought the plague with him! $2.50

The Batman Strikes Vol 2 *(In Darkest Knight;* Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) Reprinting issues #6-10 of the series based on the WB show. 104pg $6.99

Bloody Mary (Garth Ennis & Carlos Ezquerra; tpb) Collecting the miniseries Bloody Mary and Bloody Mary: Lady Liberty. Tells the gritty tale of one of the best death-dealing commandos to ever see combat, caught in a future World War. 192pg Mature readers. ... $19.99

Cartoon Network Block Party 13 (various) Billy and Grim attend a father/son picnic! Struggle with Courage as he tries to get over his fear of, well, everything, then watch out for bathtime with the Kids Next Door! $2.25

Catwoman 47 (Will Pfeifer & Pete Woods) Catwoman joins a group of supervillains who've taken over the East End! She wants to tear them apart from the inside, even if it means dealing with every baddie from Captain Cold and the Cheetah to the powered protectors of the proletariat, Hammer and Sickle! $2.50

Doom Patrol 16 (John Byrne & Byrne + Doug Hazlewood) The Doom Patrol loses a member to the dark side when Nudge's full powers and personalities are revealed. $2.50

The Flash 226 (Stuart Immonen + Kathryn Kuder & Steve Lightle) Wally gets a break on a mountain climbing expedition, but an unexpected avalanche requires a rescue from The Flash! $2.50

Green Lantern 5 (Geoff Johns & Ethan Van Sciver) An action-packed tale that pits Hal Jordan against the deadly new Shark as alien abductions across the West Coast increase dramatically! $2.99

Jack Cross 2 (Warren Ellis & Gary Erskine) Jack Cross is called into action only for a good cause... and this good cause is a missing weapon of mass destruction hundreds of times more terrifying than any nuclear device. $2.50

JLA 119 *(Crisis of Conscience* 5 of 5; Geoff Johns + Allan Heinberg & Chris Batista + Mark Farmer) The JLA faces off against Despero in Wayne Manor! But to stop Despero, the team will be forced to turn against one of its own. $2.50

JLA Classified 12 *(New Maps of Hell* 3 of 6; Warren Ellis & Butch Guice) The JLA confronts President Luthor and learns of an ancient prophecy about the coming of the Martian God of Terror – better known on Earth as the Devil. $2.99

Legion of Super-Heroes 10 (Mark Waid & Barry Kitson + Art Thibert) The Legion finally fights as a team against the brutal Terror Firma! But after the team-splintering recent events, who's in charge? 40pg $2.99

The Omac Project 6 (of 6; Greg Rucka & Jesus Saiz) To preserve the Omac Project, Brother Eye plays the ultimate trump card! $2.50

Seimaden Vol 2 (Higuri You) Blinded by his love for the beautiful Hilda, the demon king Laures fails to see a mutiny masterminded by his most trusted aide, who recruits an archdemon with powers equal to the king's own. 180pg b&w $9.99

Silent Dragon 3 (of 6; Andy Diggle & Leinil Yu + Gerry Alanguilan) Manzo and his Yakuza cohorts face certain extermination at the hands of the military – until the timely appearance of the mysterious Reizo. $2.99

Superman/Batman 23 *(With a Vengeance* 4 of 6; Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) Superman and Batman may have escaped the Maximums, but that doesn't stop those vengeance-seeking heroes from starting a full-scale invasion of Earth. $2.99

one-shot **Superman: Birthright** (Mark Waid & Leinil Yu + Gerry Alanguilan; tpb) Collecting the miniseries that features the entire modern-day retelling of Superman. 304pg $19.99

Teen Titans Go! 23 (J. Torres & Mike Norton + Lary Stucker) Red X is on a crime spree, robbing a host of places at once! $2.25

new **Vigilante** 1 (of 6; Bruce Jones & Ben Oliver) Dr Justin Powell believes in justice for the individual, including the psychotic souls whose abuse as children has led them to do terrible things. Vigilante believes in the right of society to be protected from these psychotics with no regard for restraint or the law. $2.99

Wonder Woman 221 (Greg Rucka & Rags Morales + Mark Propst) Wonder Woman goes on global patrol, saving lives and spreading her message of peace wherever she can. $2.50

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 524 *(Acts of Aggression* 6 of 6; J. Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) What horrors do the hordes of Hydra hold in store for Spider-Man and his teammates? $2.50

Araña 9 (Fiona Avery & Roger Cruz) Araña goes to a very dark place as the appearance of her mother's killer awakens a thirst for vengeance. $2.99

new **Black Widow 2** #1 (of 6; Richard K. Morgan & Sean Phillips + Bill Sienkiewicz) The further dark exploits of Natasha Romanova, the original Black Widow. Some say she's a traitor, some say she's a murderer, and what most say about her isn't even printable. Mature readers. $2.99

Cable/Deadpool 20 *(Bosom Buddies* 1 of 4; Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) Deadpool finally gets hired! There's a missing hard drive, and whoever gets it could very well own the world! .. $2.99

Captain America 11 (Ed Brubaker & Steve Epting) Who is the Winter Soldier, and how did he come to be one of the most effective weapons of the Cold War? $2.99

Daredevil 77 (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev) Wilson Fisk makes an offer to the Feds they can't refuse. The Kingpin offers up Matt Murdock in exchange for a free pass out of trouble and the Feds are taking the deal! $2.99

Defenders 3 (of 5; Keith Giffen + J. M. DeMatteis & Kevin Maguire) The Dread Dormammu enters the cosmic essence of the entity called Eternity – absorbing his infinite power! $2.99

new **Drax the Destroyer** 1 (of 4; Keith Giffen & Mitch Breitweiser) The crash of an interstellar prison transport spells big trouble for an isolated Alaskan town. $2.99

Fantastic Four 531 (J. Michael Straczynski & Mike McKone) Hot on the heels of last issue's shocking final page, the FF are faced with a two-pronged attack! $2.99

House of M 7 (of 8; Brian Michael Bendis & Olivier Coipel) The heroes have gathered around the forces of the House of M. But who was really responsible for these heinous crimes against humanity? And will the world ever be the same again? $2.99

Hulk: Destruction 3 (of 4; Peter David & Jim Muniz) A ghost from the past promises a cure for Banner and Blonsky – but what are the deadly consequences of getting their greatest wish? Mature. $2.99

one-shot **Last Hero Standing** (Tom Defalco & Pat Olliffe) The great heroes of the Marvel Universe are vanishing without a trace! Collects Last Hero Standing #1-5. 120pg $13.99

New Avengers 11 *(Ronin* 1 of 3; Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) Who is Ronin and why has Captain America recruited him into the fold? $2.50

New X-Men 18 (Nunzio Defilippis + Christina Weir & Aaron Lopresti) The curtain opens, revealing the atrocities being performed in Sunfire's Japan. $2.99

Nightcrawler 10 (Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) The pieces are in place and the lies have fallen away. The stage is set for Nightcrawler's final confrontation with the person who's ripped apart his past. $2.99

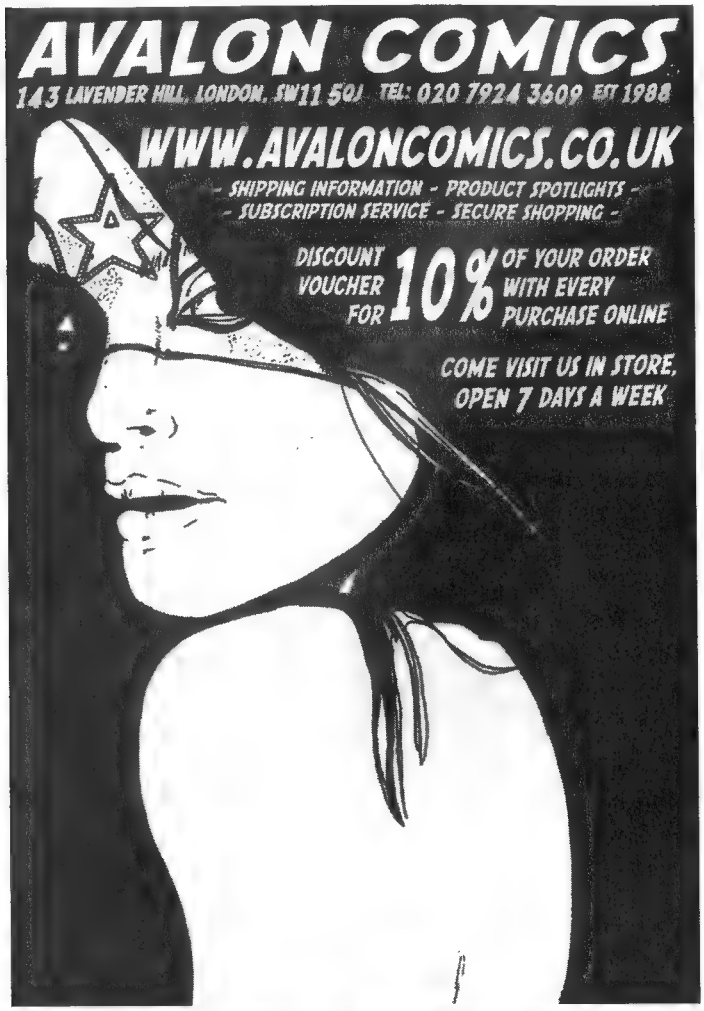
one-shot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Alternate Universes 2005** (various) Contains in-depth bios on all manner of versions and variants, from Earth A to Earth X and all Earths in between! 48pg $3.99

Runaways Vol 4: True Believers Digest (Brian K. Vaughan & Adrian Alphona) When a group of teenagers discovers their parents are supervillains, they run away from home! 144pg $7.99

new **The Sentry** 1 (of 8; Paul Jenkins & John Romita Jr) He's the most powerful superhero in the Marvel Universe. So why is The Sentry his own worst enemy? $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 83 *(Gang War* 5 of 7; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Black Cat tries to dissuade Spider-Man from taking down the thuggish criminal Hammerhead. $2.50

Wolverine 33 *(Chasing Ghosts* 1 of 3; Daniel Way & Javier Saltares + Mark Texeira) Wolverine carries burdens too great for even the most powerful mutants to bear. Has it caused him to finally snap? Mature readers. $2.50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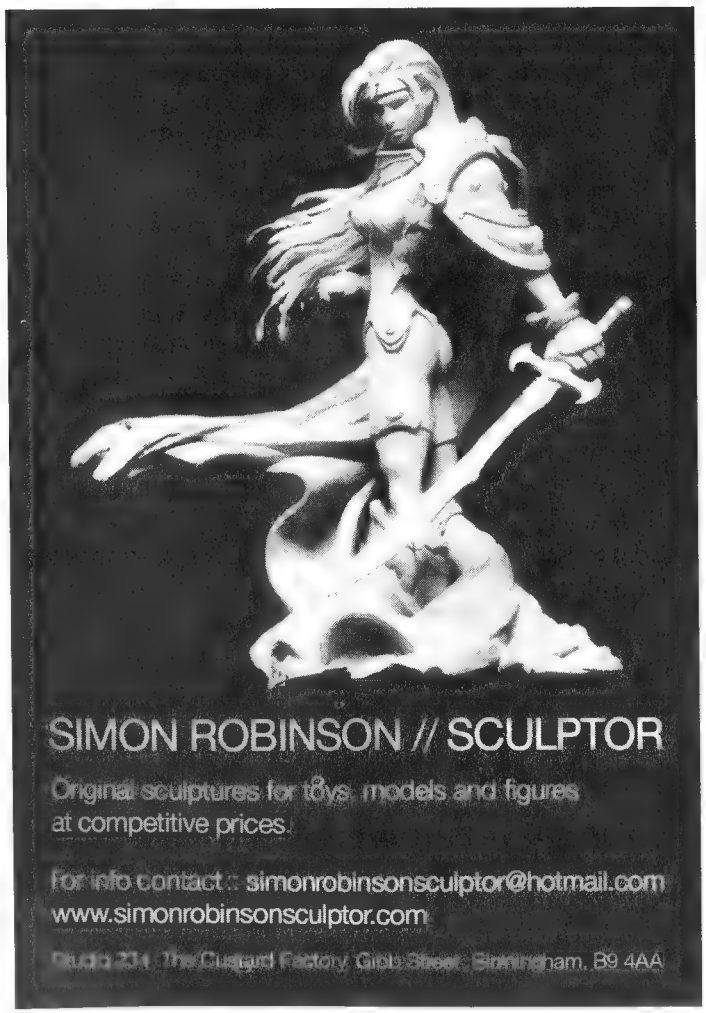
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Comment

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Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

The horror of comicbooks

Comment by Paul Dale Roberts via e-mail: JazmaPika@cs.com

IS IT my imagination or are most comics leaning more on the horror genre? I'm not complaining, but it seems like there are cycles comics go through – there's the sci-fi cycle, the human drama cycle, the fantasy cycle and, of course, the superhero spandex cycle.

Right now the industry is in the horror genre cycle. Look at how many comics deal with horror: The new George Romero movie is coming out, called the *Land of the Dead* and there must be a zillion zombie comics out there. Let's see what I can find, that is zombie related. Hmm, there's **Moonstone Monsters: Zombies** (that's obvious); then there's my hero Ash in DDP's **Army of Darkness**; **Children of the Grave** by Shooting Star Comics; **The Walking Dead** by Image; **The Night Club** by Image; **Wynonna Earp** (who is related to Wyatt Earp and she brings the unnatural to justice, including zombies); **G.R.A.V.E. Grrrls** by Midnight Show; **Papa Midnite** by Vertigo (anything with Voodoo leads to zombies – that's a given); and, of course, **Toe Tags** featuring no other than George A. Romero by DC Comics. That's a lot of zombies! Not to mention that at one time there was a **Resident Evil** comic that dealt with plague-infected cultists that were exactly like zombies!

Then am I going batty, am I seeing Dracula all over the place? He's in **Castlevania – The Belmont Legacy** by IDW; of course, Dracula is associated with **Blade**; there is a **Dracula** comic out there somewhere; there's **Billy the Kid's Old Timey Oddities** by Dark Horse Comics (oops! I goofed, I shouldn't have mentioned this comic, unless you want to count the fact that a movie came out called *Billy the Kid meets Dracula*); **Dracula vs King Arthur** by Silent Devil Productions (Lucifer sends Dracula back in time to deal with King Arthur, now Dracula is a time traveller – who would have thought? I loved the story though); **The Magdalena vs Dracula – Monster War** in which Mr Hyde, some Wolfmen and even Frankenstein will get involved in this story.

Dracula has got to be in the centre of the Multiverse, he has practically met everyone from Buffy the Vampire Slayer to Abbott and Costello to Spider-Man to Indiana Jones! I think it would be easier to determine who he hasn't met.

Of course, there are characters that connect to Dracula, like **Doc Frankenstein** by Burlyman, not to mention Avatar's **Lady Death** who has met Vampirella who has met Dracula. I guess, I could go on and on about this.

But, like I said before, there are many horror comics on the market now: **30 Days of Night: Bloodsucker Tales** by IDW; Brian Pulido's **Belladonna/ Unholy/War Angel** by Avatar; **Geowulf** by Speakeasy Comics; **C.V.O. (Covert Vampiric Operations)** by IDW; **Full Cirkle** by Full Circle; **John Constantine – Hellblazer** by Vertigo; **Karney – Hidious & Grotesque** by IDW; **Man with the Screaming Brain** by Dark Horse Comics; Jim Balent's **Tarot**; Avatar's **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre/A Nightmare on Elm Street/Friday the 13th** (keeping the legend of the newer monsters alive through its publications, but when can we see Jason, Freddie and Leatherface take on the old school monsters like Frankenstein, The Mummy and The Creature from the Black Lagoon?).

To show that I'm not losing my mind and it really is a plague (!), the other horror comics I found are Avatar's **Nightjar**, **The Witching** by Vertigo, **Rob Zombie – The Nail** by Dark Horse Comics; **Dampyr** who loves ridding the world of vampires; **Shaun of the Dead** (oh shoot, another zombie comic!) and Joe R. Lansdale's **By Bizarre Hands**.

Now, that's a lot of comics that deal with horror! I really think there are more horror comicbooks on the market than there are any other type of genre. Feel free to tell me if I'm wrong.

And there's one horror comicbook I'm really looking forward to: **The Re-Animator** returns with Dynamite Entertainment and there's a rumour saying that Ash of *Evil Dead* fame will crossover into the world of the Re-Animator!

No wonder I love comics!

Self-serving, dishonest propaganda

Comment by Mike Breen, Bournemouth

AN OPEN letter to Paul Levitz regarding his *Note from the Publisher* in DC Comics' August-dated issues:

While I will attempt to remain civilised, I have to say I found your self-serving, dishonest propaganda really quite offensive.

The judgment as to whether this is a landmark or "most exciting time" in DC's history, or whether or not you are fan favourites, is something for your audience to decide, not for you to announce as fact before the event.

Fiddling with the internal continuity of the DC Universe (again!) is hardly noteworthy and suggests you failed to get it right the last several times, however popular any resurrected characters might be.

In fact, if the return of Hal Jordan, Donna Troy, et al means that you are hyping sales by treating death as a temporary inconvenience, then perhaps the new DC logo should just spell out M.A.R.V.E.L and be done with it.

Particularly distasteful was the reference to "faithful and insightful" movies in the same paragraph as the film title *Constantine*. Who are you trying to kid? Keanu Reeves as the first authentically English character in US comics? And you forgot to promote that celluloid classic, *Catwoman*.

Similarly, your mentioning **Watchmen** in the same breath as "we changed how talented people could be rewarded and recognised" ... um, I thought one of those particular talents stopped writing for DC in large part because he felt so unrewarded (and you really shouldn't try to make it sound as though DC was the only company, or even the first, to reconsider its treatment of creators – it wasn't).

This kind of snide, hyped-up spin would be unpleasant coming from any corporate executive, but having worked on the creative side and been a fan yourself you really should know better – who do you think you are, Joe Quesada?

We get enough of this crap from the likes of politicians on both sides of the Atlantic. We can certainly do without it within the pages of comics!

Oh, and as for the new DC logo – does Colgate toothpaste mind that you are using its 'ring of confidence' design?

Hanging on . . . by a thread

Comment by Peter Sidebotham, Congleton, Cheshire

I'VE recently come to a crossroads in my comics buying, as most titles no longer maintain my interest for long; apart from the *Ultimates* and *Elseworlds* imprints, I've decided to stop buying nearly everything.

However, this is not to say that I intend to finally give up on comics, far from it.

I will continue to subscribe to **Comics International** (via Paradox Comics) and occasionally buy myself a slice of nostalgia – **Marvel Masterworks** and **DC Archives** – as well as the continuing line of Dorling Kindersley comic guides.

I recently went to my local library and was pleasantly surprised to find a wealth of graphic novels. I've since donated my remaining collection of paperbacks – **The Nail** volume 1, **Superman Batman: Generations**, **The Ultimates** volume one, and so on.

If it helps to get people reading comics, and using libraries, then it won't have been in vain.

Another plea for newsagents

Comment by Tony Ingram, Ipswich, Suffolk

WHY is it that no one else seems to see the sense of getting comics into newsagents once again?

I've been saying this for years, but everyone I mention it to seems to feel it's not a viable option because comics are now a niche market. I'm sorry, but if nobody out in the big, wide non-comics shop visiting world actually realises the bloody things are still being published how are comics ever going to NOT be a niche market?

Many titles these days seem to be aimed at an older audience, the people who grew up reading them. But while prospective readers will likely spend a sizeable chunk on buying DVDs of TV shows from their childhood or upgrading their old vinyl collections, for the most part – unless they've stayed fanatical about the medium all along – these same 20 and 30-somethings who were in all probability comics readers during their childhoods will not come back to see how their old four colour heroes are getting on, simply because, since they don't see the titles in newsagents, they think they ceased publication 15 years ago!

The only way our beloved medium is ever going to survive is by getting new blood – us older readers aren't going to be around indefinitely. So for God's sake, why doesn't someone take the initiative and get comics back in the public eye... and in newsagents!

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Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. Despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www.comicbook resources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

DETECTIVE WORK

The Kubert Brothers' exclusive deal with DC Comics was announced recently. What has not been announced yet is that Andy Kubert will be working on the **Detective Comics** series, with scripts written by Grant Morrison. Adam Kubert will be working on a new Adam Strange project with Jim Starlin.

And while we're talking Adams, Adam Hughes will be working with Geoff Johns on a year long project for DC... word has it that's **All Star Wonder Woman**. And for a little Adam overload, ex-Adam Strange writer Andy Diggle has not renewed his DC exclusive contract and, reportedly, will be doing some Marvel work to complement his DC projects.

DESPERADO DAN

DC editorial is going through some major changes. Bob Schreck is moving to the All Star books. Pete Tomasi is inheriting all the Batman titles, and Matt Idelson is editing the Superman books. And I'm told Mike Carlin's contract will not be renewed when it's up.

With a number of other employees reportedly fearful for their positions, it looks like Vice President Dan Didio, flush from his success with the new Crisis books, is looking to shake things up even more.

J FOR JEREMIAH

V for Vendetta wrapped shooting in London with the familiar angry mob crowd scene, and with an unfamiliar and slightly over-the-top-hit-me-with-a-sledgehammer of having the crowd in V masks and costumes confirmed by onlookers and photographers. Amid criticism, Joe M Straczynski got a copy of the script and emailed his thoughts to this column.

"About a month ago, I got hold of the V script, the very same draft that this anonymous assassin cites. As a fan of Alan's work, and the V books in particular, I sat down, eager to read it.

"What I read blew my brains out through the back of my head.

"I think it's one of the smartest, sharpest, insightful and well-crafted scripts I've ever read. It's emotional, evocative, heart-rending, biting, sharp, relentless and just plain garden variety powerful. It's not just a good film, it's an *important* film, and there's a great deal of subtlety and nuance in it...

"As someone who's not just written over two hundred produced scripts and read hundreds more, someone who is a fan of Alan's work, I'm telling you straight-up, with absolutely no agenda: the *V for Vendetta* script is a work of freaking genius.

"As will be proven soon enough."

CRAINE FORWARD

At the recent Toronto Comics Arts Festival **X-Statix** inker Nick Craine announced that Marvel is planning to return the X-Statix property in some form. Coupled with Joe Quesada's recent expressed love for the concept, and writer Pete Milligan's new profile on **X-Men**, expect to see the media-obsessed satirical mutant book return in the near future in some form.

CHICKEN SUPREME

It appears late last year Rob Liefeld attempted to persuade Marvel to publish **Supreme** from Marvel's Icon imprint, stating that Millar helped the pitch and promised to write the first arc.

Liefeld states he also discussed the possibility of publishing Alan Moore's Supreme stories at Marvel with a different artist for the whole run. Marvel turned him down. Liefeld reports this was over a naming conflict

continued on next page...

Net sightings

Marvel's Jrs

With the recent defection to DC by the Kubert brothers, the rumour mill has once again surrounded John Romita Jr's future, with suggestions that he may follow them. Romita Jr refuted that in a recent message board exchange: As for what's next for me... I'm going to do **The Sentry** for a limited run and beyond that a return to a Spider-Man title along with a Punisher short series and a hefty amount of creator-owned stuff thrown in... If I survive it all then I'll write that novel and re-paint that chapel in Vatican City... heh!

I was sorry to hear about the Kubert brothers leaving Marvel, but happy for them if it is worth it. I have heard that rumor about me leaving Marvel several times now and I don't know who started it.

I hear from DC on a semi-regular basis whenever my contract is coming up but not recently. Oh well.... maybe I'll be in **People** magazine next... you know, some salacious rumor about me and Selma Hayek!

Obviously his brief sojourn to Image was a one-off, so we shouldn't look forward to a Romita Jr Superman or Batman any time soon.

Global Appeal

Warren Ellis isn't quoted on Networks very often, as he doesn't much like his regular newsletter, Bad Signal, reprinted. However, he's given his blessing for the following comments, so Networks is taking full advantage.

Last year a pilot adaptation of Ellis's **Global Frequency** was filmed, starring *Star Trek*'s Michelle Forbes, but it wasn't picked up for a full series, despite generally positive reviews from those who'd seen it. However, a month or so ago, copies of it started showing up on peer-to-peer networks, and an enormous groundswell of support is growing calling for it to be given a series. Warren's reaction: I remain in an awkward position. I still haven't seen the thing, and, at this point, almost kind of don't want to. For one thing, I now know that it was the rough cut that went out to sales. The music wasn't in there, there was a placeholder ringtone (if we'd gotten the go-ahead, we were going to commission a musician to devise the GF ringtone. I was holding out for The Aphex Twin), etc etc. It's not, to me, the real thing.

As to any putative grassroots movement to get the show on the air somehow: I'm in two minds about that kind of thing, which is why I can't stand behind them. It does them a disservice to not be fully committed to them, since it's people essentially taking their time to speak on your behalf. That's a nice thing. I've never been totally convinced of their efficacy, but it's a nice thing. It also leads to people thinking that a vocal subsection of nutbags are in fact your voice. For every 99 people who speak with love and passion about your work and make you do the whole heel-scuffing awshucks bit, there's one genetic damage case who uses fictional swearwords and hires a Lithuanian midget child-actor to represent themselves as a tv producer by building a spaceship called The Paedophile out of crackers. And you can't do a damn thing about that. And associating yourself with it and then disassociating yourself from it is even ruder.

If you like the show, keep reading (writer John)Rogers' blog at http://kfmonkey.blogspot.com.

If you like the concept behind the show, then, you know, take part in some kind of political or cultural activism. Because there are more important things for a group of smart, passionate people to worry about than a TV show.

I love that people love **GF** enough to talk about these things. But I can't be optimistic about it any more. John Rogers is the optimist. John Rogers is also so rich that every night he has an army of Hilary Swank robots carry him to a bed made entirely of vaginas. Rogers will keep you updated on developments.

Also, ha ha, friends in high places have asked me to not talk about the show in specifics, for conversations are still being had.

So that is now as much as I'm going to say about it all. I don't think I intended to say THAT much. Oh well.

Starring Star Trek's *Michelle Forbes,* ***Global Frequency*** *gets the small screen treatment. Or does it?*

London free paper ***The Metro*** *upped the ante by doing a page 3 feature on the show, so it'll be interesting to see what happens next.*

It seems possible the show may be tidied up and given a DVD release to gauge reaction, but you will have to read Frame To Frame *for news on that one!*

End of Aftermath?

GI Joe *publisher Devil's Due launched their new superhero line, Aftermath, last year, with a line-up of respected writers and artists such as Chuck Dixon, Joe Casey, Marv Wolfman and Clement Sauve.*

The books, ***Defex***, ***Infantry***, ***Breakdown*** *and* ***Blade of Kumori*** *had high production values and were generally high quality. But that doesn't seem to have helped, as the following appeared on the Devil's Due site:*

First of all we want to emphatically say thank you. Thanks to every single person that shelled out money for these books, signed up for the street team, pushed these titles in your store or sent words of encouragement... you all rock. We appreciate it, a lot. The response has been great and we've enjoyed bringing this universe about. Now for the sharp end of the stick... at this time, our plans for the Aftermath Universe are going to have to be delayed. (Aftermath) **Dossiers** is still on the schedule, but the remaining issues of the current series, the crossover title, the planned ongoings and the trades are all

being put off until early 2006. This isn't what we wanted to do, but it is what we have to do at this time.

We offer our apologies for the disruption, and the assurance that it's only temporary.

Networks has read some of the books, and they are decent comics, but there seems to be a flood of new titles a time when the Marvel and DC are aggressively expanding their own lines, so many retailers taking less chances on indies.

Alias comics recently launched 12 new titles in the space of a month, and with only 3 placing in the top 300, Networks wonders if the collapse of CrossGen has taught any lessons at all?

More Spawn

Since losing the Miracleman battle (although he still doesn't seem to think he lost), Todd McFarlane's been a little quiet, but he cropped up recently to give an interview to ***The Arizona Republic*** *online, revealing his upcoming plans for Spawn, both in print and on screen. Networks reprints a chunk, with the interviewer asking McFarlane if he is as involved with the comic as he used to be:*

Obviously not as involved as when I was writing and drawing it myself (laughs). That was my life and then I sort of got distracted with some of the other businesses and started letting go of pieces of it.

But, actually recently, I've been trying to reassert myself into the equation. I sort of let **Spawn** the comicbook go on autopilot, and we've got issue 150 coming up (146 is on the stands now) and I want to shake things up here so I just had a two-hour conversation with somebody overseas who might come on board in a creative capacity. In bringing on a new editor and sort of go in a different direction, I'm sort of saying, "Hey it's time to shake the dust off this guy a little bit, and get people excited about the comicbook."

Why? Because the book has been around 150 issues which is a tremendous number for an indie, and also we're currently working on the return of Spawn in animation form, and this summer I'll be writing the screenplay for a movie I'll be directing that I hope I can get started in December or January.

So a sequel to the movie? No, I wouldn't use that word. A reinvention. If everything goes good there'll be a movie next year, and the animation is definitely coming next year. And then all of a sudden we've reinvigorated the direction of the comicbook, I mean each will happen of their own voice, but all of sudden it's like, "oh cool, Spawn is back to sort of being to the forefront of comic- books and comicbook pop culture like Spider-Man, Superman and Batman have taken their rightful place there.

Like, right. Sort of. There have also been rumours that McFarlane will be returning to the drawing board for at least a special soon. We'll keep you posted.

Andy Roberts, 1963-2005

Networks was saddened to read the following obituary on www.comicsreporter.com: Andy Roberts, a lynchpin of the UK small press comics scene, passed away on June 18 from injuries sustained six days earlier when he was hit by a motorcycle.

Roberts was known as an enthusiastic supporter of cartoonists, both personally and in print, as well as being a talented cartoonist himself among his various artistic interests. Roberts was one of the first to set up an aggressive graphic novels section in a mainstream bookstore, at a branch of the Waterstone's chain, and he was an advocate for the sales of such books throughout the company. I believe he also did the majority of the cartooning that appears on the site of the band he was in, Linus.

As well as being active with the now-defunct London Cartoon Centre in the early 1990s, Roberts was also a major force behind the Oxford small press convention, Caption.

A great cartoonist in his own right, for a few years he also wrote and drew a weekly strip for the ***Dorset Evening Echo****.*

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

This month's theme helps celebrate the recent return of writer Peter David <www.peterdavid.net> to ***The Incredible Hulk*** *– a partnership that helped make both parties fan favourites – and a reunion receiving rave reviews.*

DALE KEOWN: FULL BLEED STUDIOS **www.fullbleed.com**

The official online home of the self-taught artist widely regarded as one of the – if not THE – greatest Hulk penciller ever. With writer Peter David, Keown produced a critically-acclaimed run on Marvel's **The Incredible Hulk**, so much so that they recently reunited to create **The Hulk: The End**. Rumours are also heating up that Keown may rejoin David on the regular series. This site is given over mainly to Keown's follow-up creation, **Pitt**, and while it is slick and visitor-friendly, it needs what his creations rarely lack: more meat. **7**

LOU FERRIGNO – OFFICIAL SITE **www.louferrigno.com**

Yes, the quintessential Hulk to many of you has his very own patch of cyberspace. This bodybuilder, actor, author and former Mr.Universe's relationship with the Hulk is as long as it is fruitful. With Bill Bixby, Ferrigno helped successfully bring the Hulk to the screen, went on to voice the green one in the 1996 animated series and even had a cameo in the recent movie. Giving roughly equal measure to Ferrigno's Hulk and bodybuilding projects, his personal musings on the character would top it off. **8**

LAIR OF THE GREY HULK **www.geocities.com/lairofthegreyhulk/**

Despite its Bram Stoker inspired joke title, this well-designed site covers virtually every aspect of the Hulk. The cartoon section is especially good, followed by the Odds and Ends display of all manner of unusual merchandise. Marvel's monthly title is given a lot of attention, naturally, but the only thing missing is a latest issue rundown. Along with art, a brilliant Hulk merchandise store, links – and too much else to mention – a smashing site. **9**

JOE HARNELL – OFFICIAL SITE **www.joeharnell.com**

Having won a Grammy Award for the song – *Fly Me To the Moon* – Harnell is still best known to many as the composer of the *Lonely Man Theme*, the haunting song which accompanied the end-credits of **The Incredible Hulk** TV series. This site strongly promotes his autobiography, **Counterpoint**, yet there's still the opportunity to buy autographed **Hulk** sheet music as well as the original soundtrack CD. High-scoring. **8**

THE BEST OF THE REST:

Amazing former Hulk artist Jeff Purves deserves nothing short of such an amazing website, **www.jeffpurves.com**, but if the only incarnation of the Hulk for you is the version from the cult 1978-1982 TV show, try The Incredible Hulk Television Series Page: **http://www.incrediblehulktvseries.com** and for interviews with the late, great Bill Bixby go to **http://members.tripod.com/jhh_2/QuotesHulk.htm**.

If there still aren't enough Hulk-related sites here for your liking, try Sir Linksalot: **www.sirlinksalot.net/hulk.html**. A site that has to be seen to be believed is the truly incredible Hulk Library, **www.hulklibrary.com** and last but not least is Marvel's official character profile: **http://www.marvel.com/universe/index.htm**

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

with the property **Supreme Power** from the MAX imprint. It should be noted that Marvel is happy to publish the **Powers** book from Icon however.

It is likely that such a move would have created considerable hostility from **Supreme** writer Alan Moore, who has opposed his work being published by Marvel, and **Supreme** artist Rick Veitch who claims that Rob Liefeld has neither returned original art nor compensated him for losing it.

GOLDIE AGE

Goldie Hawn has recently written her autobiography. In it, she claims that as a young actress she was lured onto the casting couch of lecherous Al Capp, creator of the age-old American cartoon character Li'l Abner.

When she auditioned for the TV part of Daisy Mae, the cartoonist flashed her and then raged at her for not succumbing to his advances. "Go back and marry a Jewish dentist," Capp yelled. "You'll never get anywhere in this business, Goldie Hawn."

RESTORING CONFIDENCE

CGC is an American company which specialises in grading comics, then encasing them in plastic to ensure they stay in the graded condition.

But recently it appears one of their employees, a Chris Friesen, was planning to leave to start up a comics restoration business. In a bold move, CGC persuaded him to work out of CGC's offices, under the CGC name and with CGC clients. Given the negative associations hardcore comics collectors have with restored comics being graded above their unrestored condition, all sorts of conflicts of interest are being exposed right now. Especially considering CGC make a point of saying "CGC employees are not allowed to engage in the commercial buying or selling of comics. In this way, CGC can remain completely impartial, having no vested interest other than a commitment to serving clients through accurate and consistent grading."

Could this be against the spirit of the pledge?

HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Fantastic Four is going to be Marvel's big movie this summer. Based on the series created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby that kicked off Marvel's success in superhero comics and transformed an industry, it has all the hallmarks of a successful blockbuster. Stan Lee recently settled a court case with Marvel over the receipt of percentages based on films made from characters and concepts he (co)created. The estate of Jack Kirby however has not been so lucky.

It has been made clear to me that Jack Kirby's estate will not receive any payments from the **Fantastic Four** movie at all. And even the residual benefits that creators or their estates can receive from multi-media exploitation of a property, such as increased sales of books, will not benefit the Kirby estate as they do not receive any royalties or incentive payments from any sales of reprinted works, or new works based on past concepts.

According to John Morrow, publisher/editor of the **Jack Kirby Collector** magazine, Marvel have put in place a policy that only pays royalties to the family up to six years after a creator dies.

DENNIS THE MENACE

Batman Begins launched to rave reviews and a number one spot at the box office. However, the contributions of Dennis O'Neil, especially to the character Ra's Al Ghul, were of note. One person who spoke to Dennis O'Neil recently told this column that O'Neil jokingly made the point to Paul Levitz and Dan DiDio that it seemed everyone at DC had been given the script to *Batman Begins* to read but him.

Very shortly afterwards, Warner Bros rang asking O'Neil to write the novelisation of the movie. Which O'Neil accepted. This column continues to be impressed how Warner Bros conspires to manage awkward situations.

POINTS OF INTEREST, JMS TAKE 2

Joe M Straczynski has mentioned he has a miniseries called **Bullet Points** in the works for mid-2006. As he has been creating the majority of his comics work for Marvel, it can be assumed this will be part of that, along with his new unnamed maxi-series for Marvel.

Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, CI's comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <—> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Sam Ashurst (SA), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Stephen Hooker (SH), David Knight (DK), Tom McSween (TM), Scott Montgomery (SM), Kieron Mullens (KM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

DC Comics

Batman: Dark Detective 3

by Englehart & Rogers + Austin

<-> Nostalgia isn't what it used to be. I could easily wax lyrical over this artistic trio's past stint on **Detective Comics** from the late 1970s. But now they're back and it's so much like the Sex Pistols and The Monkees reforming and touring again. Steve Englehart overwrites, Marshall Rogers under draws and Terry Austin gets to pick up the pieces. A major disappointment. (SH) 3

Batman: Dark Detective 4

by Englehart & Rogers + Austin

<++> Steve Englehart delves into Bruce Wayne's childhood, via the Scarecrow, to add some depth and interest. Consequently, this makes for improved reading over the last issue. The art is allowed, finally, to speak of character and atmosphere. Marshall Rogers' layouts and attention to detail improve from page to page and Terry Austin relaxes his inks. The artistic team gels at last! (SH) 7

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 192

by Williams III + Johnson & Fisher

<+> With the new movie out, DC is heavily pushing the Dark Detective and his earlier exploits. Although far from the gloomy gothic tone of *Batman Begins* and its inspiration, Frank Miller's **Year One**, Seth Fisher brings an alternate vision of Batman's world with his clean, detailed and at times comical linework. J.H. Williams III and Dan Curtis Johnson's script captures the driven nature of Bruce Wayne and the fragile psyche of a certain cryogenics scientist, Dr Fries. (MAT) 7

The Batman Strikes! 9

by Methany & Jones + Beatty

<+> The Joker returns, except this time the self-proclaimed Clown Prince of Crime is pleading sanity, in an attempt to get himself transferred from Arkham Asylum and into Gotham Penitentiary. The young Dark Knight is determined to find out why. A good issue, one with an intriguing premise nicely executed. (SM) 7

The Batman Strikes! 10

by Manning & Craig + Beatty

<+> *Illumination* sees an unhinged Dr Kirk Langstrom (aka Man-Bat) on the loose in Arkham Asylum, and only the Caped Crusader can stop him. A moody, claustrophobic story, courtesy of new writer Matthew K. Manning and penciller Wes Craig, who bring a darker edge to this junior Bat-title. Good stuff. (SM) 8

Fables 36

by Willingham & Buckingham + Leialoha; Vertigo

<+> The Black Knight crosses dangerous lands, headed for The Adversary's citadel. Bill Willingham's Tolkein-esque romp has a certain sparkle in the detail but covers a low-key journey and so the plot feels a little flat. Mark Buckingham's art is enjoyably arranged but fails to give these new lands detailed, lively illustrations. (IM) 5

Fables 37

by Willingham & Buckingham + Leialoha; Vertigo

<++> The Blue Knight improvises against a dragon and the three Riders of the Dawn, while the Snow Queen is alerted to his approaching assassination attempt. This journey to The Adversary's citadel is dragging, but with some neatly scripted asides and appropriately quirky flashes. Mark Buckingham's art is better again but my impatience to reach the citadel grows. (IM) 6

Hawkman 40

by Gray + Palmiotti & Bennett + Jose

Hawkman's Golden Age reputation has had the effect of consigning him to the fringes of more contemporary story and character development. Thankfully, neither Justin Gray nor Jimmy Palmiotti buy into this, having instead chosen to blend DC's past with the present. The result is credible storytelling backed up by competent, well laid out artwork. Readable and enjoyable. (SH) 7

Gotham Central 30

by Rucka & Gaudiano + Kano

<-> Dr Alchemy advises on how to treat the mutated Officer Kelly. Greg Rucka's script is taut and crackles, overcoming a brief, tired Hannibal Lecter re-run. While the writing is tight and moving, including some excellent, bitter dialogue, Kano's inks are unusually heavy, clumsy at times, but the art still charms in its seeming simplicity. (IM) 6

Gotham Central 31

by Rucka & Gaudiano + Amaro

<++> Batman tackles Dr Alchemy while Kelly's mutated rampage leads him to Montoya's father's shop. Greg Rucka's sharp, savvy script packs a mighty punch while avoiding the obvious schmaltzy pitfalls the plot seemed headed towards. Stefano Gaudiano's pencils are a little cramped at times but generally good and stunning on several key emotional scenes. (IM) 8

Green Lantern 1

by Johns & Pacheco + Van Sciver + Merino

Plaster on the spandex, it's superhero time! But there's something very non-trite about this. Geoff Johns has taken the bold step of not just regurgitating the Green Lantern legend. My bête noire of over-writing is absent as well and the two artists complement each other perfectly, making this very much a breath of fresh air for the superhero genre. (SH) 8

JSA 73

by Johns & Kramer + Champagne

Atom-Smasher wants back in to the JSA – but are they prepared to take him after *Black Reign*? And will he answer Black Adam's call-back? Geoff Johns' slow plot builds promise but for now only teases on delivery. Don Kramer's pencils in The Crimson Avenger scenes are convincingly dangerous-looking but Keith Champagne's inks are otherwise flat and the JSA members' meeting inexpressive. (IM) 6

JSA 74

by Johns & Kirk + Champagne

<++> The Spectre and Jean Loring/Eclipso attack Khandaq as the JSA, following Atom-Smasher, arrive. The heavy action load is peppered by flowing motive-revealing dialogue that aids the crossover reader and quietly advances relationships, hopefully enjoyable for regulars. John Kalisz's colours provide an intense, war-zone look and Keith Champagne's inks are better for the action. (IM) 7

Rann-Thanagar War 2

by Gibbons & Reis + Campos

<-> With the book finally falling foul of typical US-style space opera melodramatics, the two-dimensional dialogue is pure corn, devoid of true personality, the dynamic plot being event-driven rather than an actual meat-and-two-veg story. Despite this, Dave Gibbons is undeniably a sound, albeit old-school writer, while the elaborate, epic visuals impress. (JE) 6

Seven Soldiers: Klarion the Witch Boy 2

by Morrison & Irving

<+> Klarion escapes his insular homeland, only to find even more strangeness outside. This is a wonderful modern-day fantasy in the style of **Alice in Wonderland** or **The Wizard of Oz**, just inverted and with more jokes and satire. Frazer Irving's art is the perfect fit. (KG) 9

<=> Crossing over very subtly with **Seven Soldiers: Manhattan Guardian**, this issue sees the Witch Boy work his way up to the legendary overworld of the subway systems and the city streets, encountering a series of colourful rogues in the process. Irving's art is eerie, made more so by the imaginative and original colour palette that lends this strange subterranean world an unearthly hue. (RN) 7

<=> Another fine comical script as our inquisitive young upstart Klarion makes his way up to the over-world of the "blue rafters" after facing monsters, child rustlers, and a fellow underworlder who escaped his puritanical upbringing. Irving's stylised artwork has an almost children's-book quality, albeit one full of Grant Morrison's clever ideas and plots. As he slowly weaves the various series together, this title also shows Morrison's witty side, but I doubt many US readers will get the reference to Ebeneezer Badde... (MAT) 8

The Twilight Experiment 4

by Gray + Palmiotti & Santacruz; WildStorm Signature Series

<--> The Righteous, humanity's greatest enemy, emerges from a coma to assassinate the US President and try to take over the world as a benign dictator. The writing works best on the quiet moments Monica and Michael share, with the rest feeling impersonal and plot-heavy. Varied art but decent Carrie Strachan colours. (IM) 4

The Twilight Experiment 5

by Gray + Palmiotti + Santacruz; WildStorm Signature Series

<+> The Righteous sets about reconstructing the world, removing WMDs and releasing a

Ex Machina 12

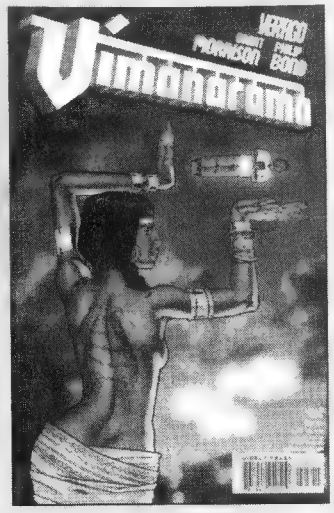
by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm Signature

<=> I've seen many dramatic revelations in comics, but the disclosure that our superhero-turned-Mayor is a secret comicbook collector is the most welcome of all. Here we have a man who so desperately wants to track down a copy of **Adventure Comics** #265 along with various **Wonder Woman** back issues that he employs one of his office staff to covertly do so on his behalf. Inspired stuff. (RN) 7

<=> While Mayor Mitchell Hundred covers up his comics collecting hobby and makes a big deal about being selected for jury service, a mysterious vigilante begins to make his presence felt on the streets. Brian K. Vaughan starts up another intriguing story arc for this hero-in-politics series. Although containing some fine character moments and being slightly more challenging than the average superhero title, it still isn't as groundbreaking as it thinks it is. (MAT) 7

Vimanarama 3

by Morrison & Bond; Vertigo



<--> Things come to an unclear and unsatisfactory end here. The writing is as sharp as ever, and Philip Bond's art is a delight, but the title seems to have run out of steam in this final phase, serving up a kludgy ending that has none of the inventiveness of earlier issues. (KG) 6

<=> The conclusion to Grant Morrison's Bradford-set Bollywood supergod invasion love story allows artist Bond to experiment, as young hero Ali's desperate attempt to save the day by suicide leads to a surreal vision of the afterlife. Those concerned about Morrison's inexplicably weird tendencies need not worry, as this is one of his more comical stories. Bond's chunky characters and Kirby-esque parodies are the icing on the cake for this fun little series. (MAT) 8

cure for AIDS that researchers held back as unprofitable; Ryan's experiments backfire. Justin Gray and Jimmy Palmiotti's writing moves up a gear, propelling through the penultimate issue with character, action and gentle humour. Juan Santacruz's inks are burdensome, the pencils competent yet unexciting, but the series is a modest success. (IM) 5

Villains United 2

by Simone & Eaglesham + von Grawbadger

<=> The most interesting aspect of this title is the evolution of zero to hero of the frankly rubbish character Cat Man. Now pumped up like a major league body builder and with a commanding presence befitting a Nietzschean philosopher, Blake adds depth to what would otherwise be a run of the mill story of two groups of villains thumping each other. (RN) 7

Y: The Last Man 33

by Vaughan & Sudzuka + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<+> Yorick stumbles on 355 in flagrante while Dr Mann learns the ship may be carrying drugs, not medicine. Brian K. Vaughan's ocean-crossing story arc steps up a gear and while the violence is somewhat unconvincingly depicted, Goran Sudzuka's pencil artwork acutely illustrates some tormented dialogue and difficult personal scenes. (IM) 8

Y: The Last Man 34

by Vaughan & Sudzuka + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<=> The Australian Navy submarine threatens Captain Kilina's well-prepared ship. Brian K. Vaughan escalates conflict and tension throughout with Yorick caught in the middle, unsure who's doing 'the right thing'. Goran Sudzuka's unfussy pencils and José Marzan Jr's consistent inks encourage the exciting plot to take centre-stage. (IM) 8

Image

Girls 1

by The Luna Brothers

The Luna Brothers follow their excellent debut **Ultra** with a David Lynch-ian tale set in the backwaters of the US. It's a textbook start to a new series with skilfully handled character introductions and plenty of quirky plot seeds to interest potential readers. Great art and great writing by a very talented pair of comicbook creators. Highly recommended (RN) 8

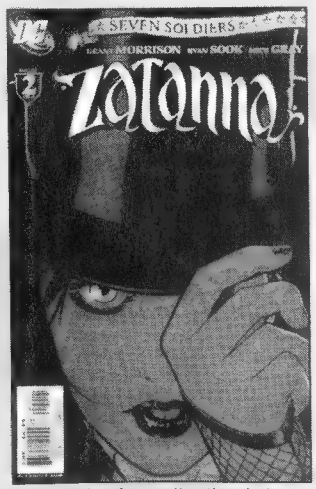
Invincible 23

by Kirkman & Ottley + Crabtree

<+> Allen the alien returns home to report his findings on Earth. This is a heart-wrenching episode, as Robert Kirkman puts one of his more popular characters through the wringer. Even so, there are the usual fun jokes, and wonderful, yet simple, art. Great stuff again. (KG) 8

Seven Soldiers: Zatanna 2

by Morrison & Sook + Gray



<+> After a frankly pretentious start the title settles down and turns its attention to a semblance of storytelling. Zatanna, having lost her powers, visits the local hippy-magick shop for clues as to the nature of the catastrophe. On the plus side Grant Morisson's version of Zatanna is very good, and the art by Ryan Sook is very elegant. On the negative side there's really not a lot going on to get excited about. (RN) 6

<+> The fish-net clad sorceress and her newly acquired sidekick drop in on a fellow magic user's shop in an attempt to shake off a shapeless demon in pursuit; but with mishap following Zatanna everywhere, events go like a bull in a china shop. Far from pretentious, this light-hearted romp shows Morrison at his inventive best. Sook's clean linework makes for an attractive choice on this good-girl title. (MAT) 8

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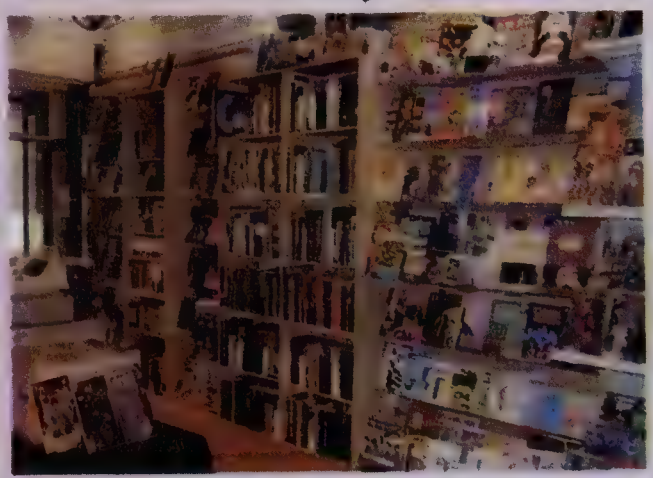

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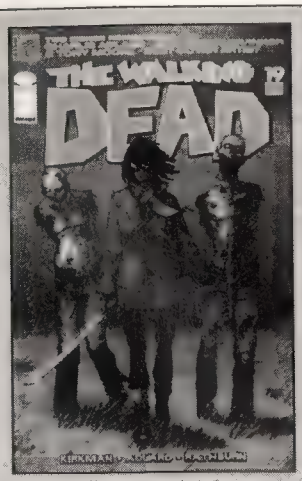
The Walking Dead 19

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn



<=> A zombie apocalypse story that is still going strong. **The Walking Dead** has whittled its burgeoning cast down to more manageable levels – a welcome change of direction given that it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep track of who's who. The casual reader can only concentrate on so many lumberjack-casual clad characters with baseball caps before fatigue sets in. (RN) 7

<=> After a violent uprising leads to another member of the cast being killed, you may be glad to hear that someone new appears on the scene. But is Rick, the group's self-appointed leader, starting to lose control? Robert Kirkman's zombie survivor series continues to play with moral ambiguities and group dynamics, but has plenty of gore, violence and stumbling undead to keep your less intellectual side happy, suitably illustrated by Charlie Adlard's dishevelled linework and shadowy inks. (MAT) 8

The Walking Dead 18

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn

<+> Rick unilaterally insists on capital punishment for allies who murder (stirring up a hornet's nest given many of these ragtag survivors are murderers), and organises Thomas's execution. Whenever the survivors begin to feel safe Robert Kirkman pulls their security from under them, here providing another gripping, terrifying cliffhanger. Bleak. Superbly bleak. (IM) 9

Marvel

Captain America 5

by Brubaker & Lark + Epting

<-> Cap links a WWII mission to the Russian soldiers he fought in London. Michael Lark memorably draws this flashback tale – which Ed Brubaker skilfully uses to explain the teenage Bucky's place next to Cap on dangerous missions – set during an atmospheric, frozen Russian winter but the inked figures occasionally look bluntly square-cut. (IM) 6

Captain America 6

by Brubaker & Epting

<--> Cap re-visits the site of Bucky's last, fatal mission, learning of Sharon's capture. The assassin's shock identity is implied (but not confirmed), suggesting that Ed Brubaker has aces left to play. Frank D'Armata's colours are too polished, veneer-like in places but Steve Epting's island scenes are moving, the hallucinations vivid and oddly convincing. (IM) 6

Daredevil 74

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<++> A close friend tells the group how Milla romanced and married Matt Murdock. Her daughter killed herself after Daredevil rescued her from The Jester – how is this connected to the vile creature from last issue? Alex Maleev's disturbing art adds nearly as much to every creepy issue, but **Daredevil** remains Brian Michael Bendis's triumph for Marvel: consistently well written and hurtling towards a nightmare conclusion. (IM) 8

<=> What began as a Chaucer-like tale of random strangers discussing Daredevil has suddenly evolved into a highly charged and very sinister story with one of the greatest endings this month of any single issue I've ever read. If the last two pages don't leave you desperate for the conclusion then you must be getting bored with comics! (RN) 8

Daredevil Redemption 4

by Hine & Gaydos; Marvel Knights

<+> Gideon claims Daredevil beat him, covering up his attempt to destroy incriminating evidence. Amos – Joel's alibi – refuses to defend his son, forcing Joel's mother to reveal long-hidden secrets. While David Hine's plot delves through clichéd revelations, the way characters respond is a distressing indictment of this Christian community, which Michael Gaydos's unsympathetic art bleakly and satisfyingly portrays. An increasingly powerful and enjoyable book. (IM) 8

District X #14

by Hine & Medina + Sicat; Marvel Knights

<--> The soap opera writing gets in the way and the characterisation borders on the offensive. Please, no more poorly written accents – zay are so, 'ow you say..? Ridiculous and crass. The artwork suffices but little more. It appears to be aimed at a particular market but that doesn't excuse this lamentable product. (SH) 3

Excalibur 12

by Claremont & Richards + Conrad

<++> Angel and Callisto help fight off Viper's invasion of Zanzibar. Chris Claremont's melodramatic script is heavy handed but works well enough. Will Conrad's inks, over Cliff Richards' pencils, are an impressive fill-in surprise and far superior to the art of the regular crew. Together they forge a semi-shadowed war zone that amps up the sense of danger and excites an ordinary plot. (IM) 6

Excalibur 13

by Claremont & Lopresti + Adams

<--> Don't let the cover fool you, only the last three pages – a bland appetiser – relate to the *House of M* summer crossover; the meat is the conclusion of Viper's assault on Zanzibar. While Chris Claremont pens a modestly entertaining series of fights, Greg Adams' inks fluctuate but are generally clunky, flaying Aaron Lopresti's unexceptional pencils. (IM) 3

Excalibur 14

by Claremont & Lopresti + Adams + Rapmund + Vancata

<+++> Dr Strange strolls with Xavier through his memories in search of the hidden Scarlet Witch, finding echoes of Magneto's life and the history of Sinister. Three inkers help establish shifting mindscapes but the story dominates. Some may dismiss this as cod psychology but it illuminates motives and hints at the truth of *the House of M*. (IM) 6

Fantastic Four 527

by Straczynski & McKone + Lanning

As the feted **Amazing Spider-Man** writer debuts, the US military ask Reed to help duplicate his original flight and give soldiers Fantastic Four-like powers. And, absurdly, given the team's recent financial crises, Ben learns that he has a forgotten account full of cash. All played for easy laughs and accompanied by unexceptional, pedestrian art: competent but as yet uninspiring. (IM) 5

Giant-Size X-Men 3

by Whedon + Lee & various

Hey folks, it's another 'homage' to the iconic **Giant-Size X-Men** #1 cover! How original. Anyone expecting anything "all-new" will be sorely disappointed, as this is simply a reprint issue with an ineffectual flashback tale. Joss Whedon could have knocked off his slim story in his sleep; fortunately Neal Adams shows he hasn't lost his edge with his muscular, heavily inked artwork. The reprints hark back to classic 1960s Lee and Kirby issues and the young mutants' early team-ups. (MAT) 6

Gravity 1

by McKeever & Norton + Glapion

Greg moves to New York to study and start his superhero life, but like the GLA he finds it hard to tell who's ripping folk off and who needs help. Rising writer Sean McKeever does amusing and cute but not risible schmaltz and gives this miniseries a fun start. Marvel's version of **Invincible**? (IM) 7

Marvel Knights 4 #18

by Aguirre-Sacasa & Muniz + Fridolfs; Marvel Knights

<+> The reunited team and Nathaniel Richards face Ramades' time-torn armies. Derek Fridolfs' artfully shadowed inks echo Jae Lee and with Jim Muniz's pencils highlight Reed's personal distress. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa combines a succinct plot with wry humour and an emotional kick ending for a satisfying, straight-forward (as time tales go) action adventure. (IM) 8

Marvel Knights 4 #19

by Aguirre-Sacasa & De Landro + Batt ; Marvel Knights

<++> A young Inhuman (Alecto) and Alpha Primitive (Reyno) flee Attilan and seek help from Sue, knowing that if Alecto endures the Terrigan Mists they will be forcibly separated. The fill-in artists leave Alecto's gender unclear because of the androgynous age, although the final scene suggests female, a storytelling weakness that left this reader intrigued at the possibilities rather than irritated. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa's plot could be weighted by worthiness but avoids that and forges a thoughtful tale and continues his pro-active, strong reading of Sue. (IM) 6

New Thunderbolts 8

by Nicieza & Grummett + Erskine

<+> Speed Demon agrees to help The Shocker commit a robbery, and Blizzard tries to intervene. Fabian Nicieza ably plots a mainstream, old-school comic, with Beetle/Mach 5's uncertain leadership hovering over events, making a decent, lightweight but unremarkable snack. There's no subtlety in Tom Grummett's art either, but there is clarity. (IM) 5

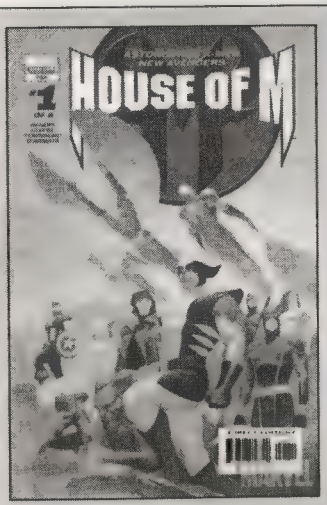
New Thunderbolts 9

by Nicieza & Richards + Kesel

<++> The Thunderbolts try to mediate a disagreement between Namor and the Radioactive Man. This is a bit too wordy, but it is nonetheless a fascinating examination of

House of M #1

by Bendis & Coipel + Townsend



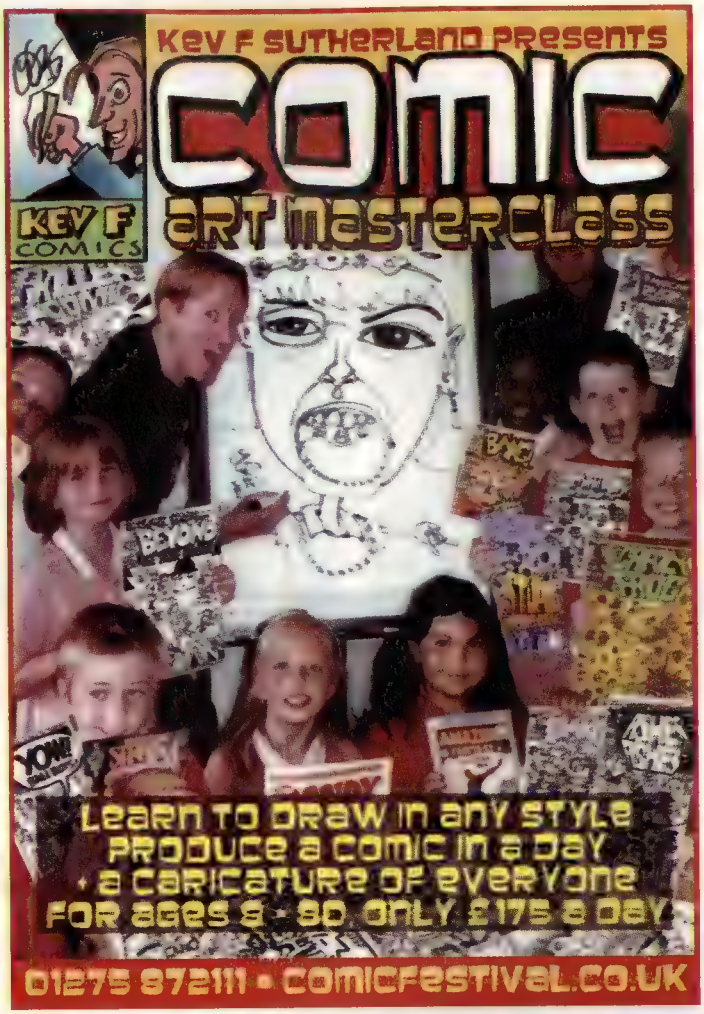
The Scarlet Witch's powers are spiralling out of control, risking the world in the process. Marvel's superhero elite gather to decide her fate... essentially a debate on euthanasia with capes. Thanks to Brian Michael Bendis's trademark wit and art bordering on the spectacular, this is a strong opener. (SA) 8

Bendis follows up his fan-divisive *Avengers Disassembled* with a team-up 'event' as the X-Men and the Avengers gather to decide how to deal with the unhinged menace of the Scarlet Witch's reality-altering powers. No great surprise that the opening issue is mainly full of tortured characters and slow exposition, but the "surprise" last page will leave folks reeling. Olivier Coipel's stout characters look a lot sharper under Tim Townsend's inks, with more sympathetic reproduction than his prior fuzzy pixelated Avengers work. (MAT) 6

House of M #2

by Bendis & Coipel + Townsend

<—> Wanda's defence mechanism kicks in, with some startling results for our heroes. Marvel creates its big stories by having meetings and debating 'what ifs', and with this plot it seems that Brian Michael Bendis raided the trash after one such meeting. What if Cap America got old? What if Spidey married Gwen Stacy? Who cares? (SA) 6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the Radioactive Man and his motivations. Good guest art from Cliff Richards too. (KG) 7

<-> Radiation is poisoning Atlanteans; can the grudge-bearing Radioactive Man help – and simultaneously take revenge on Atlanteans for the terrorist attack on Beijing? Karl Kesel's inks give Radioactive Man a brooding menace. Fabian Nicieza's plot is irritating and simplistic, and writing Monica Rambeau (Photon) so immature frustrates and defeats the good will I'd loaned **New Thunderbolts**. (IM) 3

Powers 11

by Bendis & Oeming; ICON

<=> Deena lashes out at her violent ex, but with her newly-acquired powers she will have to live with the consequences of her actions. Never one to worry about shaking up the status quo, Brian Michael Bendis reveals a darker side to his character, although I doubt he'll have as many irate fans e-mailing him over this as the manic Hawkeye fans who continue to fill the hilarious letters pages. This sombre, almost silent issue allows Michael Avon Oeming's moody artwork to carry the story. (MAT) 8

Runaways 4

by Vaughan & Alphona + Yeung

<++> The Runaways interrogate Victor, trying to figure his father's identity (revealed to readers only on the final page). Brian K. Vaughan excels himself with pithy, witty and charming dialogue, with one laugh after another bringing a teenage voice to dramatic events, without distracting. Adrian Alphona is still vague on smaller figures but generally pleases. A satisfying meal. (IM) 8

Shanna, The She-Devil 5

by Cho; Marvel Knights

<=> Frank Cho is certainly suited to drawing buxom young ladies in a state of undress. This mini shows that if he was paired off with a good writer we'd have some eye-catching and literary comics. Instead we get simply written formulaic eye candy at best. With dinosaurs. And secret Nazi bases. (RN) 6

Spellbinders 2

by Carey & Perkins + Hennessy

<=> Kim communes with ghosts and finds herself trapped in an on-flame science lab, with no help coming. Mike Carey's high-school drama mixes TV's *Buffy* and cinema's *The Craft*. Mike Perkins' close-ups seem related to Greg Land's, and while the series is nothing new it's an enjoyable supernatural drama with smart comic flourishes. (IM) 5

Supreme Power 17

by Straczynski & Frank + Sibal + Sotomayor; MAX Comics

<+> Hyperion hangs out in a strip bar, while **The Washington Post** decides whether they want to 'out' him. As ever with **Supreme Power**, the explicit content warning actually means something other than a few random swearwords tossed in for effect. Deep, dark and disturbing; J. Michael Straczynski puts the human into superhuman, and for that you should thank him. (SA) 9

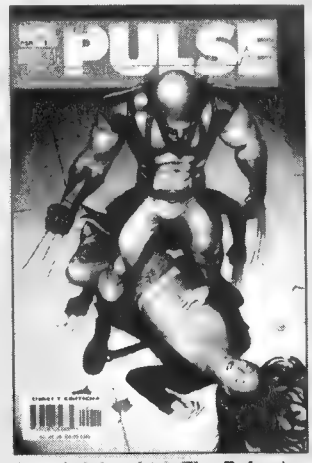
Ultimate Fantastic Four 18

by Ellis & Kubert + Hanna

<=> The Fantasticar and Nihil's ship crash into Vegas over four gaudily drawn dialogue-free pages. Then the two teams fight until this drawn-out arc concludes. A striking cover but the story is poor value for money – there's no substance, leaving me feeling ripped off. (IM) 3

The Pulse 9

by Bendis & Lark



<++> Jessica finally traces Luke Cage, via Wolverine and a plot to kill Nick Fury. Brian Michael Bendis finally delivers on this *Secret War* tie-in with a plot and script worthy of such. The dialogue is superb, at times caustic and subtle, including an odd Wolverine scene that feels more genuine than Wolverine ever usually does, and Michael Lark's expressive art fits the rewarding, delicately characterised script beautifully. (IM) 9

<+> Jessica Jones finally tracks down Luke after spending months stumbling around without a clue. For the first time this feels like the **Alias** of old, with tight plotting, snappy Bendis dialogue and inspired characterisation from 'B' level characters (particularly the Danny-Jessica confrontation over Luke's safety). **The Pulse** has undergone a drastic shift in style and tone and all for the better. Bendis is back on form here after a very dodgy start. (RN) 7

<=> Jessica gets angry, Wolverine blubs, and Iron Fist gets a little too protective about his ex-sparring partner Luke Cage. Bendis brings to a close another disappointing arc to his superheroes and journalist title – the last few issues have just felt like endless pages of Jessica screaming and crying, making little sense to those not interested in his *Secret War* series. Fortunately Lark's appearance as artist lifts the title above the monotony and makes it more in keeping with Bendis's crime-drama scripts. (MAT) 6

Uncanny X-Men 459

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<+> The X-Men try to rescue Ororo before her storms cause a global ice age. It's been a bustling five-issue arc but the climax still feels rushed thanks to unhelpful Chris Claremont pacing. Key scenes have richer Mark Farmer inks over tense pencils and vividly contrasting Matt Milla colours, so the art is somewhat improved but the bulk of the issue is still bland. (IM) 4

Uncanny X-Men 460

by Claremont & Raney + Hanna

<+++> Home from the Savage Land, the team get up-to-date – including Colossus's return, Beast meeting the resurrected Psylocke, Xorn's fate for Nocturne and Juggernaut and making excuses for Mark Millar's Wolverine. The dialogue's improved and characters over-react in very human ways. This is easily Chris Claremont's best issue since returning. Tom Raney's art reminds me of Alan Davis sans cuteness, but can feel static. (IM) 7

Wolverine 28

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

John Romita Jr struggles hard to keep up with the demands of Mark Millar's script as Logan rides a Sentinel bareback into the secret base of The Hand. The scale of devastation described is really Bryan Hitch territory and Romita Jr, despite his many strong points, can't really cope with the degree of detail required. It is nevertheless a good comic that is somehow less than the sum of its parts. (RN) 6

Wolverine 29

by Millar & Romita Jr + Janson; Marvel Knights

<=> Wolverine versus ninja troublemakers The Hand. Silly over the top action, but done this well, I can't complain. Mark Millar provides solid writing, but the artists are the stars here, providing page after page of stunning visuals. Why Marvel doesn't put John Romita Jr on something more high-profile like **The Avengers**, I will never know. (KG) 8

X-Men 170

by Milligan & Larroca + Miki

<-> The X-Men fight an invasion armada of Golgothas in outer space. Peter Milligan's dialogue is clumsy and the action sequences difficult to fathom for both writing and art; and while the stark blacks of space are atmospheric, Salvador Larroca's pencilled expressions are static and very poorly inked. (IM) 3

X-Men 171

by Milligan & Larroca + Miki

<-> Foxx out-runs hunters to sanctuary at Xavier's, where she immediately makes advances on Gambit. Insensitive Danny Miki inks once more diminish the art, but Salvador Larroca is so far from his beautiful peaks that it's unfair to single either out. The seemingly predictable plot stinks; the smell of rot so early in Peter Milligan's run is troubling. (IM) 2

X-Men: Phoenix End Song 5

by Pak & Land + Ryan

<+> Quentin Quire and Emma and Phoenix resurrect Sophie, who spurns his affection; Jean and Phoenix re-unite in the White Hot Room. Greg Pak's confusing, complicated and bad soap opera tale concludes, and the well-publicised claim that this is "the last ever Phoenix story" is destroyed by the epilogue. Magnificent Justin Ponsor colours and very pretty, sometimes too pretty, art can't redeem this mess. (IM) 5

US Indies

Bigfoot 4

by Niles + Zombie & Corben; IDW

<=> A revenge-driven teenager and a hard-bitten sheriff hit the woods to take down the man-eating Sasquatch in the bloody conclusion to Rob Zombie and Steven Niles' action-horror series. Niles may be single-handedly scripting IDW's output, but fortunately this series doesn't require much more than grunts, roars and a few action flick clichés. Still, Richard Corben's chunky, visceral artwork carries the flimsy plot to better places. (MAT) 6

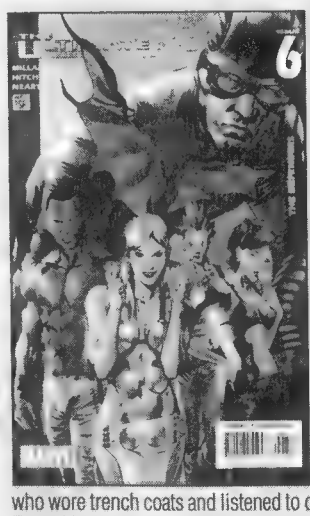
Frank Miller's Robocop 8

by Miller + Grant & Ryp; Avatar/Pulsar

<=> Another painfully delayed issue finally arrives as Avatar's adaptation of Frank Miller's **Robocop 2** nears its conclusion. Murphy comes to the aid of his booby-trapped colleagues, facing again OCP's crooked enforcers and a psychotic cyborg with even heavier armoury. Artist Juan Jose Ryp comes from the Geof Darrow school of ultra-detailed artistry, capturing every bullet, blood drop and dent. This more than likely explains the hold-up, as Steven Grant has a fairly easy job translating Miller's cynical action flick to the page. (MAT) 8

The Ultimates Volume 2 #6

by Millar & Hitch + Neary



<-> Mark Millar transforms The Defenders from a team facing surreal, trippy threats to a joke of a team, as his Ultimate Defenders are wannabe heroes, lacking powers, wearing costumes, seducing the disgraced Henry Pym for credibility. I'd buy this from an Ultimate Universe-only team, but it's galling to see The Defenders – a once great Marvel team and comic – ridiculed this way; but maybe that's just me. Bryan Hitch continues his patchy spell – sometimes accomplished, regularly lacking. (IM) 5

<=> There are few things as funny in modern comics as the debut of the Ultimate Defenders. If certain other British writers had written this the revamped Defenders would have been a team of angst-ridden counter culture types who wore trench coats and listened to obscure dirt-core bands like Rat Cellar and the Empty Vessels and talked vaguely about nanobots and viral frequencies. Instead we get a bunch of pitiful superhero-wannabes without any powers. Priceless. (RN) 9

<=> The shamed Dr Pym joins forces with a young group of wannabe superheroes calling themselves The Defenders; unfortunately their first foray into crime-fighting goes far from spectacularly. I get the impression that Millar wasn't much of a fan of the "non-team" as a youngster in his particularly cruel depiction of these second-stringers. However, the amusement of the issue doesn't deride from the more dramatic plot developments. Hitch's dense realism still works perfectly on the decidedly non-widescreen events of this issue. (MAT) 9

Fleep
by Shiga;
www.sparkplugcomicbooks.com

Jimmy walks into a phone box to call his girlfriend, but the next thing he knows, he's encased inside with no memory of what has happened, will he be able to escape with the ever-dwindling oxygen supply and fill in the gaps in his mind? Jason Shiga takes this simple premise and using even simpler black and white cartoon-like art, runs with the idea in this ingeniously clever one-shot. A brilliant example of less being more. (MAT) 8

Little Star 3
by Watson; Oni Press

<++> Andi Watson's bittersweet series about a stay-home dad who finally starts to bond with his daughter, then loses her while shopping. The writer-artist does well to keep the disappearance aspect gripping without becoming over-wrought or sentimental, and the difficult rivalry within the lead's marriage is carefully written. The black, white and grey art forms simple lines that are surprisingly communicative and any book that can show breast-feeding without sexualising it or getting heavy and worthy wins me over. (IM) 9

<=> More trails and tribulations of being a father, as Simon loses toddler Cassie in a department store, and his plans for advancing his career go down badly with his partner, Meg. Watson's expressively minimal brushstrokes are perfectly suited to such slice-of-life dramas, while the painfully honest emotions of his characters make me wonder if there's more than a little autobiographical content here. (MAT) 8

Tabloia 576
by Wisnia & various;
Salt Peter Press

<+> Chris Wisnia's psuedo-realistic picture tabloid digs up the dirt of the infamous case of "The Lump", drawing this gruesomely sinister story to a double-sized conclusion: as the grave-robbing necrophiliac is caught and justice is served, who is it? Wisnia's other, more comical, back-up strips show off his dark sense of humour and variety of styles from the ultra un-PC Dick Hammer, the rational investigations of Dr DeBunko and the Kirby-esque monster madness of Doris Danger. (MAT) 7

Canadian Indies

Super F*ckers 271
by Kochalka; Top Shelf Productions

Those of you deceived by James Kochalka's simplistic, naïve artwork will be seriously shocked by his latest series. From the get-go we get mutants masturbating, swearing, violence, drug taking and a team pet that makes Doop look like a supermodel. Kochalka is completely unforgiving in his pastiche of superheroes and their odd conventions, but wrapped in his cute artistic style it's hard to take offence. (MAT) 8

UK Indies

Mr T 1
by Bunting & Edwards + Emberlin;
AP Comics

Mr T is forced to come out of hiding to battle a new wave of drug abuse... but this comic is a lot better than the synopsis makes it sound. Some interesting character writing and solid art lift it above the somewhat clichéd setting. (KG) 7

Tozzer2 #5
by Dunlop & Lumby; Ablaze Media

<=> The mastermind is revealed – I always knew he was evil! With exquisite timing, Rob Dunlop and Peter Lumby have unleashed the final issue of their pop-culture satire just as Jacko is released and George Lucas appears on *The OC*. With at least ten laugh-out-loud moments per issue, and art that hits the mark as often as the jokes, this series is well worth picking up. (SA) 8

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 127
by Straczynski & Romita Jr, David & Buckler; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

Peter Parker adopts another high school hard luck case, exploring the consequences of his actions both as a teacher and as Spider-Man. Enjoyable though this is, the series currently lacks a solid supporting cast. The archive strip, Peter David's character-driven "The Death of Jean De Wolff", serves to accentuate this. (KM) 7

Avengers United 54
by various; Marvel Collectors' Edition/Panini UK

The Avengers' strength has always been its mix of major and minor leaguers. Geoff Johns effectively focuses on the latter, exploring both the personal crises of Ant Man and Jack of Hearts, and their mutual animosity. Meanwhile, Dan Jurgens ignites ideological and physical conflict between heavy hitters Thor and Iron Man. (KM) 7

Batman Legends 22
by various; DC Collectors' Edition/ Panini UK

Judd Winick and Dustin Nguyen's "As The Crow Flies" has been a worthy follow-on from the atmospheric "Broken City". However, there should be little surprise that the issue's highlight is "Batman: Year One", as Frank Miller delivers a gripping introduction to Gotham City and its defining characters, supported by gritty art from David Mazzuchelli. (KM) 8

Judge Dredd The Megazine 233
by various; Rebellion

<-> Judge Dredd continues to be bamboozled by the *Monsterus Mashin-ashuns of P.J. Maybe*. Devlin Waugh and his allies walk through a shining door into Hell. Zancudo, Johnny Woo and The Bogie Man all come to an end. Anderson: Psi-Division contends with the continuing spread of the Half-Life virus. Three Dredd strips drawn by Garry Leech are reprinted, *Attack of the 50-foot Woman* being a personal favourite of mine. (DK) 7

2000 AD Progs 1441-1444
by various; Rebellion

<++> This is the best **2000 AD** has been this year. Judge Dredd's niece is in danger

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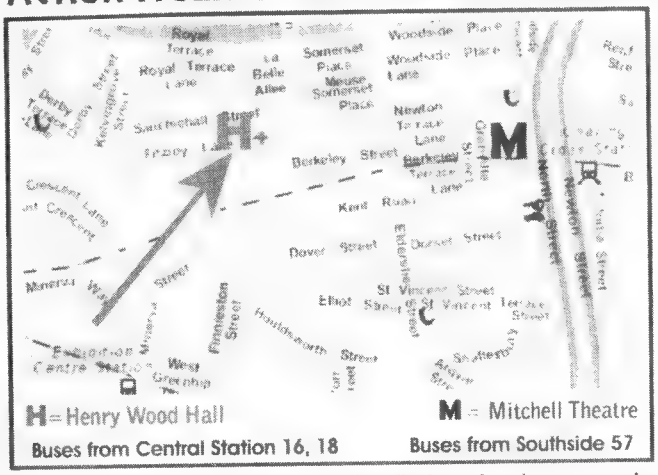

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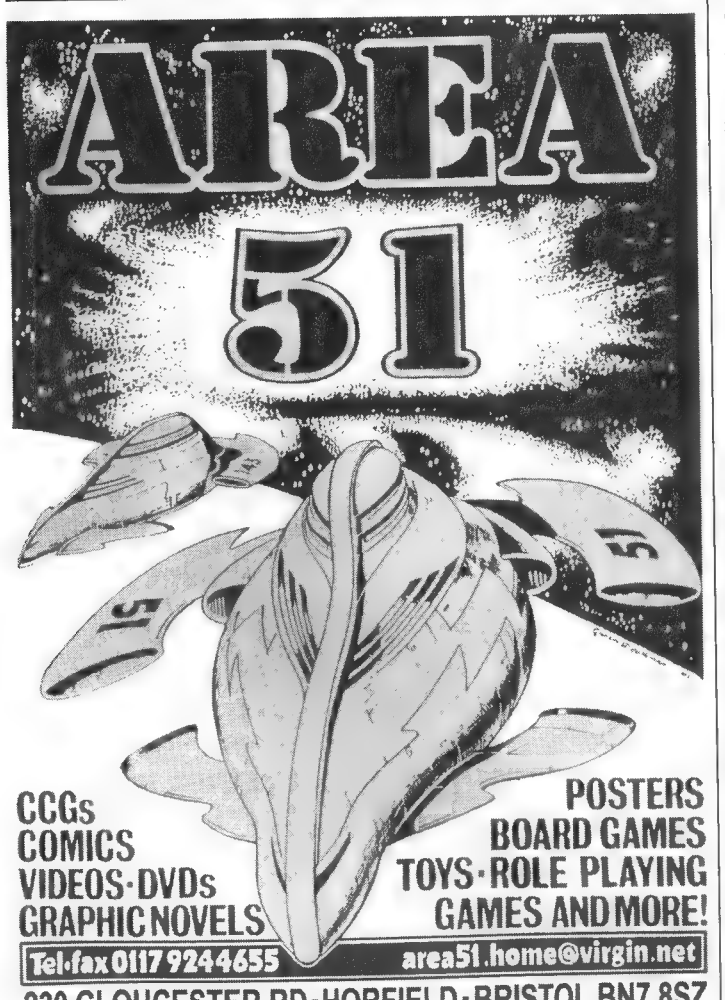

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from an enemy spy in *Blood Trails*. *Slaine* ends in a superb double-length finale. *Shakara* returns in two extended instalments with mind-boggling art by Henry Flint and Robbie's Morrison's cheeky script, introducing new adversary Valentine D'eath. *Caballistics Inc.*, *Sinister Dexter* and *Atavar III* complete the line-up. (DK) 9

2000AD Extreme Edition 10

by Smith & Marshall/Watson; Rebellion

Judge Dredd has to stop his zombie doppelganger in the 1996 story *Darkside*. Originally a 12-part serial, John Smith's story feels rather padded, with Paul Marshall's art not quite capturing the oppressiveness of the Luna-1 setting. Jim Watson's 1978 alien invasion tale *Colony Earth* is an enjoyably gung-ho back-up story. (KM) 6

UK Titles

Modesty Blaise: The Hell Makers

by O'Donnell & Holdaway + Romero; Titan Books

The latest volume of stories showcases the last ever art of the late great Jim Holdaway and the 'super singing seventies' art of Enric Romero who took over at short notice. Romero adds a typically Latin touch in sexing up Modesty and his style is particularly suited to the flamboyantly confused period when flared trousers ruled the roost. Peter O' Donnell's writing is consistently good and the depth of character and detail that comes across within the limitations of a three panel newspaper format is amazing. (RN) 8

Small Press

Dark: Part Four

by Rubins & Rubins;
£3.50 from A. Rubins
50 Hillside Grove, Southgate
London N14 6HE

<=> Anna and Karen Rubins draw to a close their intriguingly surreal mini-comic as Helen and Michael make the journey from the world of afternoon to that of night. In a similar manner to Becky Cloonan on the **Demo** series, Karen mixes art styles throughout the series to represent the different planes of each time of day, this time using a looser line and rough ink washes, with even the font changing as the characters move on. Although at times darkly cynical, the series ends on a touchingly humanistic tone. (MAT) 7

Devilchild Volume III: Heaven's Prisoners

by Winter & Burns + Dennis + Leslie; Moonface Press;
£5.99 from www.devil-child.co.uk

<+> Troy storms Heaven in an attempt to rescue his friends. This continues to be an idiosyncratic and entertaining read, but this volume is perhaps more exciting than previous books, as the stakes are raised and more information about the characters and setting are revealed. The best yet, even with the loss of the back-up strips. (KG) 8

Empirical Majesty 1

by Bartlett & Kortsarz;
Just Over Broke, 75p from A. Bartlett
25 Westmoreland Street
Cardiff CF5 1LU

This attractive comic takes the form of a 16-page booklet with a cover in the style of a 1930s Penguin novel. Secret agent Kelvin Vijay Brooke is the hero of a spy drama set in an alternate history in which the twentieth century begins with Britain as a republic founded upon scientific reason, and America is ruled by the irrational exiled Hanoverian monarchy. Glimpses of Victoriana nicely evoke the age of empire. (DK) 9

Jock Kirby's The Wild, The Not-So Beautiful and the Damned

by Kirby; £4 from J. Simpson
1/1, 5 Harland Cottages, Scotstoun
Glasgow G14 0RS

This 60-page large format horror-fest is totally the work of Jock Kirby, who can best be described as a Mike Matthews for the 21st century. A slick production, it features non-stop adult horror via Jack Kirby riffs, Vincent Price and the resurrected Heap in a solid value-for-money package. If Kirby would only work larger or use a finer nib, his currently over-blocky art would seriously impress. Solid in all respects. (TM) 7

Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero! 6

by Pearce; £1 from G. Pearce
42 Talbot Road, Penwortham
Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX

Mike Battle takes on the nefarious hordes of PANDA. Spot on political satire is mixed with a humorous yet lovingly nostalgic look back at Marvel UK's **Action Force** comic. Sharp writing and impressive attention to detail make this a wonderful read. (KG) 7

Tales of the Wonder Kind 2

by Ochiltree & friends;
£2.95 from G. Ochiltree
Krypton Komics, 252 High Road
Tottenham, London N15 4AJ

Retailer turned comics creator, Gary Ochiltree returns for a second issue of his unabashed superhero celebration. A solid 44-page read, with production standards – from colour covers to print and lettering – as professional as on any other title on the racks, this could almost be one of Erik Larsen's Image comics. Almost because, while the dynamics and action cannot be faulted, facial expressions are rarely as OTT dramatic as the events they reflect. However, if you're as big a fan of the Lee & Kirby '60s superheroes as the Krypton krew obviously are, this ones for you, effendi! (TM) 8

Q&A

345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ editorial@comicsinternational.com

Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Super Friends

Andy Jones
Rainhill, Merseyside

HAVE Alex Toth's storyboards or character designs for **Super Friends** ever been compiled into book form?

*The Q&A Brains Trust's Craig Johnson leaps in first with: Yes, you want the book **Alex Toth: By Design**, from Gold Medal Productions, 1996. It's jam-packed with animation conceptual drawings, storyboards, essays, observations, and comments about animation, storytelling and drawing. There are numerous other magazines and minor publications featuring some of his **Super Friends** designs and work, a fairly comprehensive list can be found at <www.comicartville.com/magnuscollectingtoth.htm>.*

*Finally, there is also a **Super Friends** trade collection out already, of issues 1, 6-9, 14, 21 and 27 (plus a limited mag) of the comic of the show.*

In 1973 Hanna-Barbera put the show on air, with Toth as a contributor. Three years later the comic launched, again with Toth plus others.

Superman/Batman Compendium

John Roche via e-mail:
mail@mediationhouse.com

WHEN I was about five or six, back in the very early 1970s, I attended a jumble sale in a local Church Hall (known nowadays as car boot sales, I believe).

As old fogies like me will recall, the problem with jumble sales was that the old bags who ran these things always had first pick and would put under the table anything that was any good.

I spied a large Superman book hidden away under the table in the 'reserved' pile, not for sale. Being the good honest little Catholic boy I was at the time, I did the only thing any self-respecting comics fan would have done and lifted the book out of the box and, like a little angel, asked the lady behind the table (who obviously wasn't the one who had reserved it) how much it was, handed over my money and then legged it outside, waiting in the freezing cold until my mother got out.

That book was what I can only describe as a compendium of Superman/Batman and Superboy stories from, I would imagine the early 1950s and 1960s. I seem to recall that it wasn't hardback but had a cardboard cover and there was even a letters page at the back that contained a letter asking why, if lead wasn't the most dense metal, Superman couldn't see through it – the answer being that it had nothing to do with how dense a metal was. I can also recall that one of the stories featured the first meeting between Superman and Batman (where they see one another's faces through the light of a porthole on a ship).

Problem is, over 30 years later, I have no idea how to begin to try tracking down this book again. I don't know what the title was, who published it, whether it was even British (I recall that it was black and white inside and there wasn't anything in there that made it obviously non-British).

If anybody can help, I will be his or her sex slave for life. Even better, if anybody has it for sale I'll buy it. I have often wondered who the little boy might have been who, having been promised this wondrous book, was then gutted to find that some twat had lifted it!

Any help would be fantastic.

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions

Warren reprints query, CI #185

The Q&A Brains Trust's David Roach notes:

WHILE putting together the **Warren Companion** with co-editor Jon Cooke (still available in shops and through Quality – quick plug!) I was in contact with the reclusive Jim Warren. I think the book rekindled his enthusiasm for his old company and there was talk of DC getting involved in some collections but sadly nothing seemed to come of it. Over the years, there have been some reprints of Warren strips from Harris, Apple and Eclipse but nothing substantial. My advice would be to track down the comics themselves if you can as there's so much quality work in them just crying out to be discovered.

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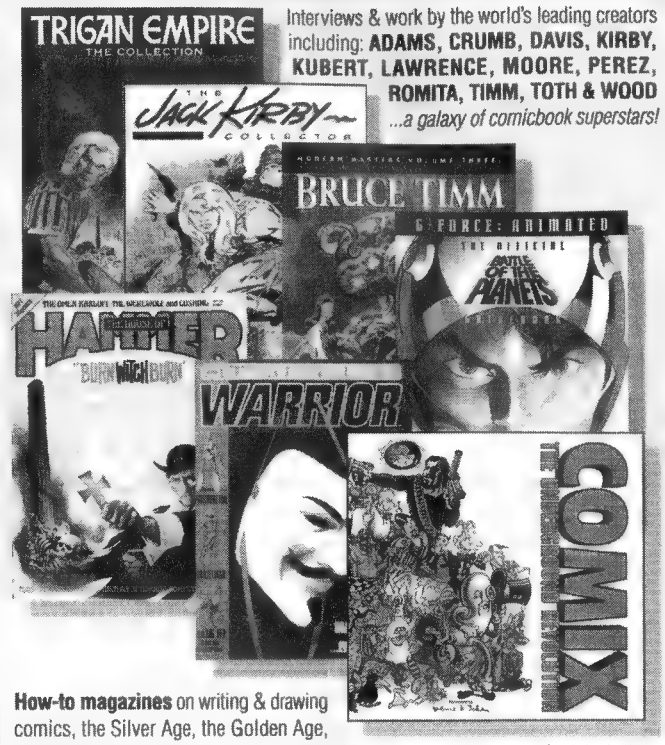

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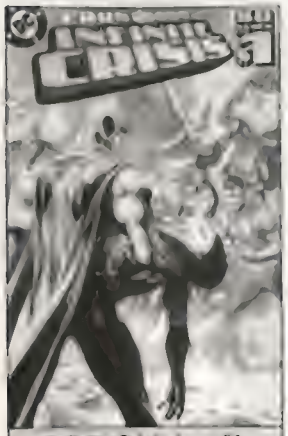

Infinite Crisis in at #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(N)	**Countdown to Infinite Crisis #1** $1 (199,704)	DC Comics
2	(1)	**New Avengers #4** $2.25 (155,113)	Marvel
3	(N)	**Ultimate Iron Man #1** $2.99 (138,753)	Marvel
4	(2)	**Astonishing X-Men #9** $2.99 (132,295)	Marvel
5	(14)	**Wolverine #26** $2.25 (105,984)	Marvel
6	(4)	**Ultimates Volume 2 #4** $2.99 (105,255)	Marvel
7	(6)	**Superman #214** $2.50 (100,943)	DC Comics
8	(N)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #1** $2.99 (95,902)	Marvel
9	(N)	**Secret War Book Four** $3.99 (93,702)	Marvel
10	(8)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #2** $2.99 (86,777)	Marvel

New Avengers down to #2

11	(N)	**Ultimate Secret #1** $2.99 (86,736)	Marvel
12	(10)	**Uncanny X-Men #457** $2.25 (86,365)	Marvel
13	(11)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #3** $2.99 (84,021)	Marvel
14	(12)	**X-Men #168** $2.25 (83,979)	Marvel
15	(17)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #73** $2.25 (83,943)	Marvel
16	(13)	**Ultimate X-Men #57** $2.25 (83,835)	Marvel
17	(15)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #74** $2.25 (83,817)	Marvel
18	(N)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse One Shot** $3.99 (81,862)	Marvel
19	(18)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #4** $2.99 (81,808)	Marvel
20	(19)	**X-Men: Age of Apocalypse #5** $2.99 (80,798)	Marvel
21	(16)	**X-Men: Pheonix - Endsong #4** $2.99 (78,705)	Marvel
22	(15)	**Amazing Spider-Man #518** $2.25 (77,225)	Marvel
23	(9)	**Young Avengers #2** $2.99 (76,666)	Marvel
24	(12)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #16** $2.25 (73,987)	Marvel
25	(N)	**X-Men: The End - Heroes & Martyrs #1** $2.99 (71,230)	Marvel
26	(18)	**Teen Titans #22** $2.50 (67,780)	DC Comics
27	(19)	**JLA #112** $2.25 (64,190)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
28	(20)	**Marvel Knights: Spider-Man #12** $2.99 (59,893)	Marvel
29	(21)	**Batman** $2.25 (59,797)	DC Comics
30	(24)	**X-23 #4** $2.99 (54,750)	Marvel
31	(22)	**X-Men/Fantastic Four #4** $3.50 (54,427)	Marvel
32	(25)	**JLA Classified #5** $2.99 (51,240)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
33	(28)	**Daredevil #71** $2.99 (49,715)	Marvel
34	(26)	**Soulfire #4** $2.99 (48,489)	Aspen
35	(27)	**Black Panther #2** $2.99 (47,533)	Marvel
36	(31)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #26** $2.25 (47,306)	Marvel
37	(34)	**Flash #220** $2.25 (46,851)	DC Comics
38	(N)	**Lex Luthor: Man of Steel #1** $2.99 (46,701)	DC Comics
39	(32)	**Fantastic Four #524** $2.99 (46,566)	Marvel
40	(29)	**Captain America #4** $2.99 (46,554)	Marvel
41	(33)	**Incredible Hulk #79** $2.99 (43,508)	Marvel
42	(56)	**Exiles #60** $2.99 (42,895)	Marvel
43	(N)	**Wolverine Soultaker #1** $2.99 (42,680)	Marvel
44	(35)	**JSA #71** $2.50 (42,674)	DC Comics
45	(42)	**Exiles #61** $2.99 (42,217)	Marvel
46	(40)	**Legion of Super Heroes #4** $2.99 (41,756)	DC Comics
47	(N)	**Seven Soldiers Shining Knight #1** $2.99 (41,308)	DC Comics
48	(46)	**Action Comics #825** $2.99 (40,877)	DC Comics
49	(30)	**Shanna, The She Devil #2** $2.50 (40,357)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
50	(N)	**Seven Soldiers: Guardian #1** $2.99 (39,560)	DC Comics
51	(52)	**Devtective Comics #804** $2.99 (39,388)	DC Comics
52	(47)	**Nightwing #105** $2.25 (38,958)	DC Comics
53	(39)	**Wolverine: Soultaker #2** $2.99 (38,918)	Marvel
54	(41)	**Outsiders #22** $2.50 (38,866)	DC Comics
55	(52)	**Nightwing #106** $2.25 (38,772)	DC Comics
56	(42)	**The Punisher #18** $2.99 (38,348)	Marvel
57	(43)	**Conan #14** $2.99 (38,180)	Dark Horse
58	(44)	**Excalibur #11** $2.99 (37,325)	Marvel
59	(N)	**Marvel Universe X-Men: Age Apocalypse '05** $3.99 (37,056)	Marvel
60	(48)	**New X-Men #11** $2.99 (35,549)	Marvel
61	(51)	**Adventures of Superman #638** $2.50 (34,479)	DC Comics
62	(53)	**Space Ghost #5** $2.99 (34,066)	DC Comics
63	(45)	**Pulse #8** $2.99 (33,367)	Marvel
64	(54)	**Batman: Gotham Knights #63** $2.50 (31,967)	DC Comics
65	(57)	**Green Arrow #48** $2.50 (31,668)	DC Comics
66	(56)	**Robin #136** $2.25 (31,645)	DC Comics
67	(52)	**Doctor Spectrum #5** $2.99 (31,435)	Marvel
68	(58)	**Rising Stars #24** $3.99 (31,035)	Image
69	(80)	**Wonder Woman #214** $2.25 (30,473)	DC Comics
70	(62)	**Runaways #2** $2.99 (30,096)	Marvel
71	(67)	**Doctor Spectrum #6** $2.99 (30,042)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
72	(65)	**Birds of Prey #80** $2.50 (29,964)	DC Comics
73	(61)	**Justice League Elite #9** $2.50 (29,815)	DC Comics
74	(63)	**Marvel Knights 4 #16** $2.99 (29,600)	Marvel
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76	(67)	**Batgirl #62** $2.50 (28,750)	DC Comics
77	(N)	**Fathom #0** $2.50 (28,553)	Aspen
78	(N)	**Star Wars: Episode 3 - Revenge o/t Sith #1** $2.99 (28,326)	Dark Horse
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87	(70)	**X-Force: Shatterstar #2** $2.99 (23,237)	Marvel
88	(88)	**Adam Strange #6** $2.95 (22,920)	DC Comics
89	(N)	**Blood of the Demon #1** $2.50 (22,801)	DC Comics
90	(N)	**Star Wars: General Grievous #1** $2.99 (22,412)	Dark Horse
91	(92)	**Ex Machina #9** $2.99 (22,352)	DC Comics
92	(84)	**Rouge #9** $2.99 (22,328)	Marvel
93	(91)	**Arana: Heart of the Spider #2** $2.99 (22,131)	Marvel
94	(86)	**Catwoman #41** $2.50 (22,029)	DC Comics
95	(72)	**X-23 #2** $2.99 (21,575)	Marvel
96	(91)	**Gambit #8** $2.99 (21,509)	Marvel
97	(N)	**Spellbinders #1** $2.99 (20,985)	Marvel
98	(99)	**GI Joe #41** $2.95 (20,571)	Devils Due
99	(95)	**District X #11** $2.99 (20,546)	Marvel
100	(83)	**Fantastic Four Foes #3** $2.99 (20,313)	Marvel

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FROM THE PAGES of **JACK STAFF!** BRITAIN'S GREATEST HERO!

A **PAUL GRIST** COMIC STRIP!

HELEN MORGAN · BEN KULMER · HARRY CRANE

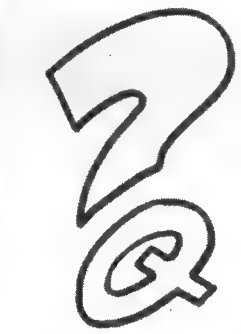
THREE UNUSUAL PEOPLE CAUGHT UP IN A WORLD WHERE THE BIZARRE IS COMMON PLACE. THEY ARE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GATE BETWEEN REALITY AND UNREALITY. THEY ARE THE INVESTIGATORS OF THE UNEXPLAINABLE. THE QUESTION MARK CRIMES. THEY ARE **Q.**

THE STORY SO FAR...

SOMETIME THIEF **BEN KULMER** IS MAKING A HASTY GETAWAY AFTER A **BUNGLED BURGLARY.**

HE DRIVES THROUGH A SMALL VILLAGE CALLED **MERRY,** JUST OUTSIDE OF CASTLETOWN.

WITH **HINDSIGHT,** THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE.



NOW READ ON...

HEY!! YOU!
YOU IDIOT!
WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
WHY DIDN'T YOU GET OFF THE ROAD?
YOU COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED!
I COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED ...
GREAT.
For THIS I just totalled my car.
What is it anyway?
Some kind of TREE SCULPTURE?
And what's it doing in the middle of the road anyway?
Or is this what they do for entertainment out in the sticks?
I don't like this.
This is just a bit too weird for me.
Trust me. I've seen weird. This is it.
It's all gone a bit WICKER MAN for my taste.

I hear the rustle of leaves.
Branches bend and stretch.
Okay...
I wasn't expecting that...
Stupid.
Stupid.
Stupid.
Still - you only get the one FREE SHOT.
Quicker than he looks...
A lot quicker.

But not every thing is what it looks like.
And I've still got a couple of suprises up my sleeve.
Damn. He's quick
Behind me, I hear the rustle of leaves.
I feel wooden branches squeezing right round me...
almost...human.
help me
SNAP
Branches bend and stretch.
And the thought occurs to me.
"What if it wasn't ME he was asking to help?"
It's kill or be killed here.
Only there's... SOMETHING about the eyes.
Something
Sorry pal.
I got my own problems.

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

A cautionary tale

Malcolm Phillips
Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd

SOMETIMES things don't always go your way.

We received a phone call recently from a customer who wanted us to auction his complete Silver Age Marvel and DC collection, amassed by him since boyhood. He told us he'd been tracking our website for years and that the time had come to sell the archive and take the family to DisneyWorld on the proceeds.

He lived in Essex near the very last station on the Central line. Since driving through London is a nightmare these days I decided to take the long journey by tube and carry a big wheelie suitcase to transport his 500 boyhood friends.

At the house it took over an hour just to put the comics in order as he said he'd never bothered to do this over a 40-odd year period as, "reaching into the cupboard and pulling out the first issue that came to hand was always much more fun". Several strong cups of tea later, plans had been laid, key issues graded, prices agreed and the collection neatly packed into the suitcase.

The station was only a few hundred yards from his house but just as I reached the forecourt I heard a screech of brakes behind me as his distraught wife catapulted out of her hot-wheeled Micra. Roger was back at home literally crying over the loss of his Marvel heroes, he'd completely changed his mind and would it be OK if he didn't sell them after all?

We returned to the house, unpacked the wheelie and put the comics back (alphabetically) into the cupboard. Roger cheered up and was really sorry for all the trouble; even the dog looked apologetic. I rode the tube train home. It seemed to take much longer.

Sometimes things don't always go your way.

CI goes Nuts

Chris Askham via e-mail:
c.askham@btinternet.com

JUST writing to say another great issue of **CI** (#185). Read it from start to finish in one sitting, which I haven't done in ages.

I notice there was no *Talking Shop* column, which I hope is not gone for good. All my favourite columns in **CI** seem to suddenly vanish without warning.

I must second the comments of Justin Moseley (Forced Humour, *Letters)* – the film features by Gary Eliot have all been f**cking appalling. Lacking in any kind of interesting content, they have just been padded out with inane little brother-type humour and silly photo captions that would be more at home in **Zoo** or **Nuts**.

Talking Shop *is back, it only skipped one issue through necessity. The film features have taken a break for now, given that the summer rush is over and there are few major comic to movie adaptations on the horizon. Point taken on the sheer volume of Gary's bad puns, however our running such features as a deliberate programme to bring in new readers did work.*

Impulse purchasers boosted sales on #184's Batman Begins *issue by a fantastic 17.5% over the previous two steady years (in fact our highest seller since 2002's spike with #151). Tweaking the experiment, issue 185 sported a non-movie Batman cover, from the Miller & Lee* ***All Star Batman & Robin****. Whether retention from #184 or new impulse buyers, our sales were again up on average, but this time only by 5.7%.*

From the hard-core reader side, the response to our competitions have always put Gary's articles at a clear second in the "My Five Favourites" coupon.

So, maybe they're a tad too ***Wizard****-like for some, but given that such features take up only two to three pages, if they can bring in new customers and expose them to our entire world of funny books, isn't it a small price to pay for a few skip pages?*

Were the impulse buyers all ***Zoo*** *or* ***Nuts*** *readers? Would our sales have risen yet higher with a more po-faced coverage? Ah, the challenge of publishing. . . . Dez*

The real mainstream

Stephen Holland, Page 45

GOOD work on the Alex Ross coup in **CI** #186!

And thanks to Dez for backing me up in the latest *Sez Dez*. I coined the term 'Real Mainstream' something like seven years ago, and it's been an up-hill battle since to the extent that Top Shelf itself recently misused the term 'mainstream'.

But that editorial of yours gave me a real buzz.

Blingfather fan

Steve Warwick via e-mail:
warwicksteve@hotmail.co.uk

HAVING read the latest **CI**, I'm very surprised at the lack of coverage of the new **Mr T** comic.

It's a huge achievement by our native AP Comics and surely is deserving of far more? OK, it had a preview in the previous **CI** yet that seemed very brief and certainly not as substantial as the **Albion** preview in this issue. It's even being written by one of **CI**'s own columnists, Chris Bunting.

The easy reply could be you don't allow bias in these matters but not only are we all guilty of this in business (Dez's editorial is always referring to his achievements) but if I had an employee who did so well I'd most certainly want to promote that!

Bias is bias yes, but business is business. I for one am really looking forward to **Mr T** and would love to know more!

We couldn't really have covered ***Mr T*** *in #185, Steve. Having done so in #184, it wouldn't have been terribly newsworthy!*

Columnists focus on areas of expertise, hence their having columns (and Chris Bunting did mention ***Mr T*** *in his!). But in our news coverage we pride ourselves on a level playing field approach. No bias.*

On previews, we have space for up to 13 a year, so ***Mr T*** *did well to get one out of the thousands of new titles a year! We didn't receive enough useable material for a two page preview unfortunately, but – in combination with a* ***CI*** *cover blurb and earlier editorial – it certainly got more column inches than most, even those from the Big Two.*

But, as we suspected, our readership isn't the main ***Mr T*** *target audience, as seen in the poor showing of the preview in #184's competition "favourite features" results.*

OK, so sometimes we take a gamble – remember the football cover? But still no bias!

John Brosnan

Neil Welch via e-mail:
neil@neilaccounts.freeserve.co.uk

MY WELL-worn copies of **Movie Magic** and **James Bond In The Cinema** are still frequently plucked from my bookshelves and read for the sheer fun of it. There is nothing like sharing one's enjoyment of something, and John Brosnan's enjoyment of movie special effects and Bond films leaps from the pages of those two books.

And, if I recall, **Starburst** #1 – the one he lent you £500 to help fund, Dez – contained a review of the first *Star Wars* movie, contributed by Mr Brosnan himself.

Thank you for passing on the news of his sad death.

Comics: bug or drug?

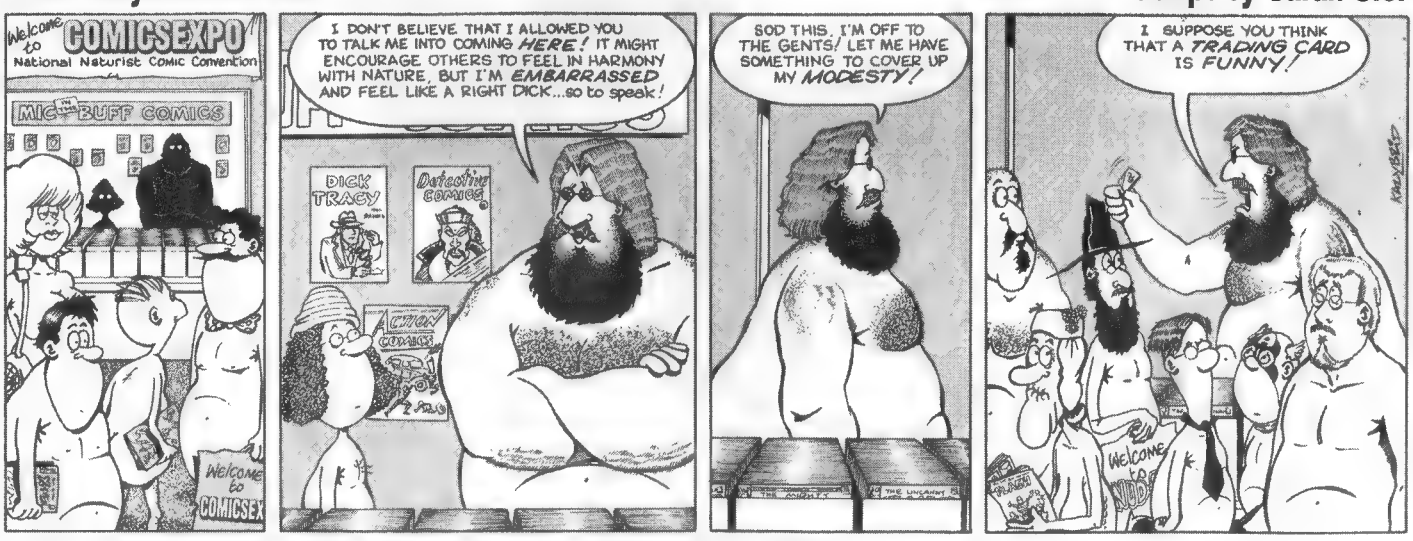
John Simpson
1/1, 5 Harland Cottages
Scotstoun, Glasgow G14 0RS

I SOLD my comics collection years ago to avoid starvation and started training myself in the ancient arts of comicbook writing and drawing in the jaded hope that someday if I can earn a living doing it, I can afford to buy comics again.

I put my neck on the line

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Sarah Sier


Welcome to COMICSEXPO
National Naturist Comic Convention
MIC BUFF COMICS
Welcome to COMICSEX
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT I ALLOWED YOU TO TALK ME INTO COMING HERE! IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO FEEL IN HARMONY WITH NATURE, BUT I'M EMBARRASSED AND FEEL LIKE A RIGHT DICK...so to speak!
DICK TRACY
Detective COMICS
ACTION COMICS
SOD THIS, I'M OFF TO THE GENTS/ LET ME HAVE SOMETHING TO COVER UP MY MODESTY!
I SUPPOSE YOU THINK THAT A TRADING CARD IS FUNNY!
WELCOME TO

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

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Communications
ONLINE

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Exclusive Comics International stories
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Listings, QCL back issues, and much, much more!

www.qualitycommunications.co.uk

printing my latest comicbook, **Jock Kirby's The Wild, The Not So Beautiful and The Damned.** *[See this month's* Classified *for details.]*

I haven't paid rent for months and I'm wondering how the hell to avoid being evicted. Scary, though that is, I couldn't help myself because I love comicbooks!

How about a feature in **CI** that shows how to go from working in small press comics to mainstream comics? *[Because it would be a four word feature: Keep practicing, keep pestering!]*

I purchased the last couple of issues of **CI** – in grim terror, awaiting a review of my comic – and found 'em a good read.

The piece that struck a chord with me the most was Dez's tribute to John Brosnan. It reminded me of a similar scenario in my past, and all the magazines mentioned I read as an impressionable kid. (I still have some of your old **Monster Mag** posters displayed on my bedroom wall and there is a direct link between the gory pictures in the magazine and the gory pictures in my comic strips.)

I loved the honesty in the tribute!

Panel Beaters

Rob Cox via e-mail:
robert.cox40@ntlworld.com

MAY I make a suggestion as to the next artist to feature in *Panel Beaters* please? This legendary artist drew prolifically for **2000AD** from Prog 1 (26/02/1977) right up to Prog 760 (07/12/1991) and is, in my opinion, right up there with all the greats of comic art.

His name... Massimo Belardinelli.

*While we replied to **2000 AD** fan Rob, passing on the Mass, he did help us line up Mike McMahon for a future issue (when we can squeeze it in). Thanks, Rob.*

Charity comics

Julian Goford via e-mail:
juliangoford@hotmail.com

HAVING just read *Sez Dez* in **CI** #186, I was reminded of an idea I have long thought would return comics to the UK mainstream.

Charity shops have always been a treasure trove for collectors of all types so, in conjunction with a charity, why not launch a comic that would appeal to children but also be of interest to adults, like many good comics do, to be sold in its own chain of stores?

I was reintroduced to comics through the newsagent distribution of titles like **New Warriors** and **Hulk**, as well as Marvel UK's **Complete Spider-Man**. Stories of this level would be far more suitable than ones that involved the complicated ethics of war and domestic abuse.

A charity such as Oxfam, Scope or Relate could use such a platform to spread useful information to a wider audience, including children, through entertainment.

It might also make comics shops less taboo for the uninitiated.

Now that's a seriously good idea! Any takers?

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
AP Comics ..... www.apcomics.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Devil's Due Publishing ..... www.devilsdue.net
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre ..... www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

OTAKU.CO.UK
Secure online shopping for the latest anime, manga and game collectables direct from Japan ..... www.otaku.co.uk

Downloadable software

PANELSYS
The ultimate panelologist's database system for organising your prized collection! Take a free trial today ..... www.panelsys.com

PANELOLOGIST
Comprehensive comics cataloguing software available for only £4.99. Download a free trial today or buy online ... www.panelologist.com

On-line auctions

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics ..... www.compalcomics.com

Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art ..... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net

COLMORE COMICS
Quality Silver Age and Bronze Age on the UK's newest state-of-the-art website! ..... www.colmorecomics.com

COMIC BIZ
"Britain's favourite comicbook company" Over 250,000 items for sale ..... www.comic-biz.com

COMIC CAVE
Advance imports and Previews merch. Up to 25% discount. Shop in Sheffield. Free delivery ..... www.comiccave.co.uk

Comics Forever ..... www.comicsforever.com

COMIX-SHOP.CO.UK
Hot comics, new imports, fast service, nice prices... Go on, take a peek ..... www.comix-shop.co.uk

86TH FLOOR COMICS
Advance import comics and merchandise. Comprehensive, easy-to-use monthly catalogues! www.86thfloor.com

EPIC HEROES
Comics, toys, DVDS, posters, games, CCG. All available to order online. Next day delivery ..... www.epicheroes.com

GOLDUST COMICS
Fantastic range of Golden, Silver and Bronze Age comics on our easy-to-use website ..... www.goldustcomics.com

INCOGNITO
Access over 500,000 comics on the UK's fastest and funkiest comics website ..... www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping ..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com
OK Comics ..... www.okcomics.co.uk
Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online ..... www.silveracre.com

30th CENTURY COMICS
Golden Age, comprehensive Silver and Bronze Age and 15,000 British comics all listed www.30thcenturycomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30, Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat-Sun 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30, Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 148 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0LB. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Transformers) 020 7240 7672

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6, Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Cosmic Legacy, 7 Shrubbery Road, Streatham, London SW16 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 11-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, ind, merch) 020 8696 9428

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

Piranha, 3 Zurich House, 299 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-3 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, prl) 020 8915 0858

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Close Encounters, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Wed 9.30-6; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 1/2 The Corn Exchange, Albert Street, Derby DE1 2DS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 19-23 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01159 484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (two floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Travelling Man, 4 Dale Street, Manchester M1 1JW. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0161 237 1877

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda Street, off the Moor, Sheffield S1 4QD. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Wed-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

OK Comics, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate, Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 0113 246 9366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Tues/Thurs-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 43 Grainger Street, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 5JE. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0191 261 4993

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

2Tone Comics, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Thurs-Sun 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl,

merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

American Graffiti, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 230 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8NZ. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-7; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs 9.30-6; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 02392422731

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Travelling Man, 8 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5NF. (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, prl) 0117 925 8833

Isle of Wight

NEW **Cheap Thrills**, Unit 8, Central Market, Scarrots Lane, Newport PO30 1JD. Mon-Fri 10.30-5.15; Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, merch) 01983 530570

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-9; Fri-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (evenings)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri 10-5.30; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon 10-8; Tues-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-8; Fri-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Wed 10-5; Thurs 10-6; Fri-Sat 10-5; Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Wed 9-5.30; Thurs 9-8.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 1-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat Street, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

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Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (00322) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17 378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

July 14-17: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '05, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. 001 619 491 2475. www.comic-con.org

August 5-7: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2005. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. 001 608 226 0200. www.wizarduniverse.com

August 13-14: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Memorabilia, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5SZ. 0870 224 8615. www.memorabilia.co.uk

August 26-28: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2005, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. www.hobbystar.com

September 2-5: United States

DRAGON*CON 2005, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

September 17-18: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 001 410 526 7410. www.comicon.com/baltimore

September 18-19: Finland

THE 19TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu

October 7-9: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, Box 31, 5838 Bergen, Norway. 0047 986 71 710. www.raptus.no

October 12-13: Belgium

FACTS 2005, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. 0032 2 534 63 67. www.facts-convention.com

October 29-November 1: Italy

LUCCA COMICS & GAMES. Organisers: Lucca Comics & Games, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. 0039 583 48522. E-mail: info@luccacomicsandgames.com

November 16-18: England

PROCON 2005, The Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Organisers: Quality Communications. Website: www.procon2005.co.uk

November 19-20: England

COMIC EXPO 2005, Hilton Metropole, Brighton. Organisers: Quality Communications. Website: www.comicexpo.biz

January 26-29: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 24-26: United States

MEGACON 2006, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant)
(00)1 516 656 5000

AIT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels)
(00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels)
(00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked)
(00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles)
(00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles)
(00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles)
(00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles)
(00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure)
(00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga)
(00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise)
(00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles)
(00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles)
(00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles)
(00)1 714 2880200

MOVED MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC, 417 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles)
(00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books)
tel: (00)1 919 449 0344
fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)
020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, Fourth Floor, 184-192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP (humour, licensed and pre-school titles)
020 7380 6430

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums)
020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels)
020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles)
01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD)
01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels)
0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics)
020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)
(0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32
fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics)
tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20
fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums)
(0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles)
tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41
fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums)
tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88
fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles)
(0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums)
0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums)
0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s = wholesale available
dis = bulk discount terms
cat = phone/write for catalogue
s-cat = sae for catalogue
wants = wants lists accepted
s-wants = sae with wants lists
CoBRA = Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc = major credit cards accepted
sae = send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

*Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through **Detective Comics** #225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and **Showcase** #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Colmore Comics & Collectibles, Vienna House, Starley Way, Birmingham B37 7GN (cat, cc, high grade, CGC) 0121 767 1803 fax: 0121 767 1910

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High Street, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: from Bronze Age , Marvel Age and Lead Age up to Platinum Age, Gimmick Age, Image Age and beyond. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Chapter 12, 2 Prospect Place, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1LE (wants, s-cat, CoBRA) 01843 860354

86th Floor Comics, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, Putney, London SW15 1JP (cat, wants, CoBRA, cc) 020 8788 2052

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

NEW **Dynamic Auctions**, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 7HD (cat) 07709 286312

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

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Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

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For Sale

Comics collection for sale, featuring Marvel, DC and indie titles at cheap prices. Includes 25% discount on total order. For full list send an sae to Dale Morrall, 66 Penygraig Road, Townhill, Swansea SA1 6JY.

Underground comics for sale. Issues from 1970s and 1980s, low prices (adults only). For details please send an sae to Tony, 203 Hunters Square, Dagenham, Essex RM10 8BQ.

For sale: Bronze, Silver and modern Marvel collections with key issues. **Hulk**, **Spider-Man**, **Fantastic Four**, **X-Men**, **Avengers** and more! The more you buy the bigger the bonus. Get in touch and make me an offer now, before they sell. Send an sae to Martin Withey, 89 Elliot Rise, Hedge End, Southampton SO30 2RW or e-mail martin_withey@hotmail.co.uk.

Set sales: **100 Bullets** #1-38 (three issues missing) £50; **Jon Sable** (Grell) #1-40 (one issue missing) £40; **Green Arrow** (Grell) #1-50 £40; **Sandman Mystery Theatre** #1-44 £50; **X-Force** #116-129 and **X-Statix** #1-26 £50; **Spectre** (Ostrander) #1-46 £35; **Red Rocket** #1-7 £12; **Universe X** #0-X (16 issues including DF variants) £25; **Midnight Nation** (JMS) #1-12 (two issues missing) £10. All prices include UK postage so these prices represent good value reads. Steve Coates, 150 Uplands Road, West Moors, Dorset BH22 0EY. Call 01202 895180. or e-mail steve.coates1@btinternet.com

Comics, TV and film memorabilia and collectables for sale. Large selection of Marvel, DC and indies. Toys, original production animation cels, screen-used props, etc. We are a long-established London mart and NEC Memorabilia trader, now online at www.quitebizarre.co.uk. Not on the Internet? Call 020 8699 2196 with your wants.

Massive summer sale. Over 30,000 comics – 1980s to present, including DC, Marvel, indies, Milestone, 2099, Prestige, graphic novels, hardbacks, etc. Including over 800 mini/maxi sets priced below trade prices. Everything priced to sell and in mostly near mint condition. 14-page list available from Richard's Comics, 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH. Tel: 01902 335027

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **Wizard** or **Hotspur** annual from 1940s or 1950s. Must be in reasonable condition. Call 01491 573749.

Wanted: **The Flash** (volume 2), **Birds of Prey**, **The Huntress** and **New Teen Titans**. Please send details and prices to Neal Clutterbuck, 12 Riddimore Ave, Redhill, Hereford HR2 7LJ.

Wanted: **Marvel Masterworks** #5, 7 and 8 but must be 2002/3 reprints with limited number 'original style' sleeves, preferably still shrink-wrapped. Good price paid or could trade for most originals. Derek Smith, 57 Grange Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2PQ.

Wanted: *Superman Adventures* cartoon (on DVD or VHS) – any episodes starring Supergirl. Send details and price to David Phillips, 50 Heathfield Road, Croydon, Surrey CRO 1EW.

Wanted: **Superman** Golden Press #11195. Desperately seeking a copy of this 144-page Superman anthology that was published in 1978. Does anyone have a spare copy or know anyone who has? Also: Dell Comics **The Monkees** #1-17, **Huckleberry Hound**, **Yogi Bear**, **The Flintstones**, **DC 100 Page Super Spectacular** #5, **Love Stories** (recent reprint OK). Most others. Gold Key **HR Pufnstuf** #1-8. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Well, here it is, the Mars, Red Planet issue of **From The Tomb**. Articles, commentary and features. Part colour, 72 A4 pages, with colour cover. £4.95 (plus £1 p&p) from Peter Normanton, 619 Whitworth Road, Lower Healey, Rochdale OL12 0TB. E-mail: peter.normanton @btinternet.com

Remember when comics had guts? Remember when comics were dangerous? Get the most outrageous comic you'll ever read, while you can! Jock Kirby's **The Wild, The Not So Beautiful and The Damned** Uncut Collectors Edition. 60 shocking pages! £4 from John Simpson, 1/1, 5 Harland Cottages, Scotstoun, Glasgow G14 0AS.

What does "bahala na!" mean? Find out in **Bahala Na! 05**. You'll also find pixies, ninja, aliens, baseball and a leucrotta. No other comic can offer this combination! Black and white with colour cover, 20 A5 pages. £1.50 (cheque only) from David Goodman, 34 Banner Street, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 0HQ. www.bahala-na.co.uk

Launch yourself into interstellar conflict as **Comics Restrospective** #19 takes a look back at one of the greatest Avengers sagas ever – the Kree Skrull war! Aliens, inhumans, mandroids and Neal Adams; this one's got 'em all! Available now for #1.40 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Looking for artists in a manga style! Can you draw in a manga style? Would you like to collaborate on a publishing project? Send photocopied art samples to John A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Renegade #0 is out now! Action and adventure, sci-fi, horror and fantasy comics strips from the best small press creators in the UK and Ireland – Doyle, Cobley, Elliot, Lock, Naring, Askham, Miller, Scholes and Atkins. Colour cover, 48 A4 pages. Only £3.50, •5.25 or $5.95 (p&p included in all prices) from Chris Atkins, 31a Peterswood Close, Woodhouse Park, Manchester M22 9RP.

Cruel Britannia: Friday night in a small British town. Black and white with colour cover, 20 A5 pages, mature readers. £1.80 from Andrew Reed, 4 Piltdown Close, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1UU.

Parataxis #6! Re-issued from Bionic Comics comes the sixth part of the Parataxis epic. A ghost from the past visits a team member and the tension builds towards a major confrontation! Send two first class stamps to Peter Hammerson, Remanic, Bolachoir, Ferns, County Wexford, Republic of Ireland.

Shades of Grey – 22-page anthology featuring retired superheros, rampaging teenage hormones, vengeful fathers and cyborg hamsters! Available for £1.50 in p&p from J. Bonney, 21 Peck Way, Rushden, Northants NN10 6BD.

Too young to remember House of Horror? Warrior? Samhain? Dracula! Hammer films! Intestines! Demons! Samurai sword action! Only in **Paragon**! Only £1.50 from Dave Candlish, 5 Cedarway, Whitehills, Tyne and Wear NE10 8LD.

Issue 13 of **Dogbreath** the **Strontium Dog** fanzine is now out – unlucky for some! 40 pages of strips, articles and general silliness. Send £2.75 to A.Kear/ Dr Bob, Flat 11, Beaufort Court, 1 Beaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ.

Wanted: two pro-quality artists to work on projects for submission to publishers. Genres involved include western, sci-fi, superheroes, pirates and horror. Please send photocopies only to Terry Hooper, 203 Ashton Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol BS3 2PY. Overseas artists also welcome!

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

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2005
SUNDAY AUGUST 21

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
A refreshments counter and bar will be open next to the venue.

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 17TH JULY, 21ST AUGUST, 2ND OCTOBER 2005

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 7476 6873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

July

17/7 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
30/7 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Rutherford Hall, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, off College Street ..... (p67)

August

6/8 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)
13-14/8 **Birmingham:** Memorabilia with special guests, NEC, Birmingham (p14)
20/8 **Glasgow:** Glasgow Comic & Card Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p48)
20/8 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p67)
21/8 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
27/8 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p67)

September

3/9 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)
10/9 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Rutherford Hall, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, off College Street ..... (p67)
11/9 **London:** The London ABC Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russell Square ..... (p47)
17/9 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)
18/9 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p67)
24/9 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p67)

October

1/10 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)
2/10 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
8/10 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p67)
15/10 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p67)
22/10 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Rutherford Hall, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, off College Street ..... (p67)

November

5/11 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p67)
12/11 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Aston University, Students' Guild Hall, Aston Triangle ..... (p67)
19-20/11 **Brighton:** Comic Expo 2005, Hilton Metropole ..... (p15)
19/11 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p67)
20/11 **Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p67)
27/11 **Glasgow:** Glasgow Comic & Card Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p48)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

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BIRMINGHAM	**SATURDAYS:** **SEPTEMBER 24th, NOVEMBER 12th** ASTON UNIVERSITY, STUDENTS' GUILD HALL, ASTON TRIANGLE, BIRMINGHAM
LEEDS	**SATURDAYS:** **SEPTEMBER 3rd, OCTOBER 1st, NOVEMBER 5th** LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, BRUNSWICK HALL, MERRION WAY
LIVERPOOL	**SUNDAY:** **SEPTEMBER 18th, NOVEMBER 20th** GLADSTONE HOTEL, LORD NELSON STREET, LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER	**SATURDAYS:** **AUGUST 6th, SEPTEMBER 17th, NOVEMBER 19th** SACHAS HOTEL, TIB STREET, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE *NEW VENUE!*	**SATURDAYS:** **JULY 30th, SEPTEMBER 10th, NOVEMBER 19th** RUTHERFORD HALL, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, ELLISON PLACE, OFF COLLEGE STREET, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAY:** **AUGUST 27th, OCTOBER 8th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
SHEFFIELD	**SATURDAY:** **AUGUST 20th, OCTOBER 15th** THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, MAIN HALL, MAPPIN STREET (off West Street), SHEFFIELD

DEALERS: WRITE FOR INFORMATION PACK

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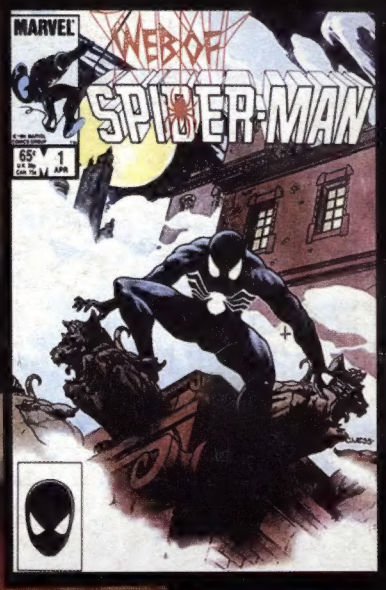

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